United Nations A/61/PV.36

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

36th plenary meeting
Thursday, 19 October 2006, at 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Baja (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 103 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2006.

As members will recall, when the 35th plenary meeting was adjourned, on Tuesday afternoon, 17 October 2006, there remained one seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States to be filled. In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the next round of balloting by secret ballot. This twenty-third round of balloting will, in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, also be the tenth unrestricted ballot.

I call on the representative of Egypt on a point of order.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): I have a procedural question before we begin the balloting. We would like to propose that we establish some kind of a timeframe for the voting process, because we have committee meetings and other engagements and matters to attend to. With its indulgence, therefore, we would ask the presidency to clarify, before the end of the day, how the process will be structured — without, of course, getting into substantive questions regarding candidatures and so on. We have other committee work and engagements. My proposal, therefore, is to devote two or three days per week to this issue. I also propose that the General Assembly take into consideration the Id al-Fitr holiday, and not schedule any votes on Monday and Tuesday.

The Acting President: The presidency will take into account the comments of the Ambassador of Egypt.

For the twenty-third round of balloting, may I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States may be a candidate, except those out-going members and those already members of the Security Council, namely, Argentina and Peru.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and

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Caribbean States, the name of one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State. If a ballot paper contains the name of a Member State that does not belong to that region, that ballot will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the Acting President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B – Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	190
Abstentions:	5
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Votes obtained:	
Guatemala	108
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	77

Since the result of this ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We must therefore proceed to the eleventh unrestricted ballot.

For the twenty-fourth round of balloting, may I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States may be a candidate, except those outgoing members and those already members of the Security Council, namely, Argentina and Peru.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State. If a ballot paper contains the name of a Member State that does not belong to that region, that ballot will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the Acting President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B – Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	7
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Votes obtained:	
Guatemala	106
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	79

Since the result of this ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We must therefore proceed to the twelfth unrestricted ballot.

For the twenty-fifth round of balloting, may I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States may be a candidate, except those outgoing members and those already members of the Security Council, namely, Argentina and Peru.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State. If a ballot paper contains the name of a Member State that does not belong to that region, that ballot will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the Acting President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.30 a.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B – Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	8
Required two-thirds majority:	123
Votes obtained:	
Guatemala	103
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	81

Since the result of this ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We shall therefore proceed to the twenty-sixth round of balloting, which is the thirteenth restricted ballot.

The twenty-sixth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Guatemala and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. That is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Guatemala or Venezuela, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the Acting President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B – Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	7
Required two-thirds majority:	123
Votes obtained:	
Guatemala	104
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	80

Since the result of this ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We shall therefore proceed to the twenty-seventh round of balloting, which will be the fourteenth restricted ballot.

This twenty-seventh round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely Guatemala and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Guatemala or Venezuela, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the Acting President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.25 p.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B - Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	8
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Votes obtained:	
Guatemala	105
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	78

Since the result of this ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We shall therefore proceed to the twenty-eighth round of balloting, which will be the fifteenth restricted ballot.

This twenty-eighth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely Guatemala and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Guatemala or Venezuela, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the Acting President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.30 p.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B – Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	8
Required two-thirds majority:	123
Votes obtained:	
Guatemala	105
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	79

Since the result of this ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We must therefore proceed to the thirteenth unrestricted ballot. For the twenty-ninth round of balloting, may I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States may be a candidate, except those outgoing members and those already members of the Security Council, namely, Argentina and Peru.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State. If a ballot paper contains the name of a Member State that does not belong to that region, that ballot will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the Acting President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.55 p.m. and resumed at 1.10 p.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B – Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	7
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Votes obtained:	
Guatemala	107
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	77
Costa Rica	1

This unrestricted ballot has again been inconclusive. In accordance with the rules of procedure, we should continue with a series of unrestricted ballots. However, in view of the lateness of the hour, I propose that we postpone further balloting until 3 p.m. this afternoon. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with that proposal.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

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General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-first session

37th plenary meeting
Thursday, 19 October 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 103 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President: The General Assembly will continue with the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2006.

As members will recall, when the 36th plenary meeting was adjourned earlier today, there still remained one seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States to be filled.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the next round of balloting by secret ballot.

This thirtieth round of balloting, in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, will also be the fourteenth unrestricted ballot.

For this thirtieth round of balloting, may I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States may be a candidate except those outgoing members and those already members of the Security Council, namely Argentina and Peru.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B" for the Latin American and Caribbean States the name of one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

If a ballot paper contains the name of a Member State which does not belong to that region, that ballot will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 3.15 p.m. and resumed at 3.30 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	7

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Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Guatemala	107
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	77
Bolivia	1

Since the result of the ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We must therefore proceed to the fifteenth unrestricted ballot.

For this thirty-first round of balloting, may I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States may be a candidate except those outgoing members and those already members of the Security Council, namely Argentina and Peru.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B" for the Latin American and Caribbean States the name of the one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State.

If a ballot paper contains the name of a Member State which does not belong to that region, that ballot will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 3.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	6
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Guatemala	108
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	77
Bolivia	1

Since the result of the ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We shall therefore proceed to the thirty-second round of balloting, which is the sixteenth restricted ballot.

This thirty-second round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected in the previous ballot, namely Guatemala and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Members are requested to remain seated until the ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Latin American and Caribbean States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Guatemala or the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	191

Number of invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	189
Abstentions:	6
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Guatemala	107
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	76

Since the result of the ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We shall therefore proceed to the thirty-third round of balloting, which is the seventeenth restricted ballot.

This thirty-third round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely Guatemala and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Latin American and Caribbean States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Guatemala or Venezuela, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.10 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	6
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Guatemala	108
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	77

Since the result of the ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We shall therefore proceed to the thirty-fourth round of balloting, which is the eighteenth restricted ballot.

This thirty-fourth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely Guatemala and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" for the Latin American and Caribbean States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Guatemala or Venezuela, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 5.20 p.m. and resumed at 5.40 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	190
Abstentions:	6
Required two-thirds majority:	123
Number of votes obtained:	
Guatemala	108
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	76

Since the result of the ballot has again been inconclusive, there still remains one seat to be filled

from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We must therefore proceed to the thirty-fifth round of balloting, which is the sixteenth unrestricted ballot.

For this thirty-fifth round of balloting, may I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States may be a candidate, except those outgoing members and those already members of the Security Council, namely Argentina and Peru.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B" for the Latin American and Caribbean States the name of one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State. If a ballot paper contains the name of a Member State which does not belong to that region, the ballot will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mrs. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) and Ms. Dinevska (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 5.50 p.m. and resumed at 6 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	7
Required two-thirds majority:	123
Number of votes obtained:	
Guatemala	103
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	81

This unrestricted ballot has again been inconclusive. According to the rules of procedure, we shall continue with a series of unrestricted ballots. However, I should like to inform members that the next round of balloting will take place on Wednesday morning, 25 October 2006, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/61/PV.38

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

38th plenary meeting
Friday, 20 October 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Second report of the General Committee (A/61/250/Add.1)

The President: In paragraph 1 (a) of its report (A/61/250/Add.1), the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade", be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matter".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in the agenda of the current session under heading I?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 1 (b), the General Committee further recommends that the item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform members that the item entitled "Commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade" becomes item 155 on the agenda of the current session.

In paragraph 2 (a) of the same report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Extension of the terms of the ad litem judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994", be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in the agenda of the current session under heading I?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 2 (b), the General Committee further recommends that the item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform members that the item entitled "Extension of the terms of the ad litem judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide

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and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994" becomes item 156 on the agenda of the current session.

The General Assembly has thus concluded the consideration of the second report of the General Committee.

Before proceeding further, I would like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 105 (c) on the election of the members of the United Nations International Law Commission, which has been scheduled to take place on Thursday 16 November 2006. In order to facilitate the election, and in accordance with the established practice, the General Assembly will take an advance decision on the matter of requesting the Secretariat to issue a consolidated list of candidates reflecting all submissions and changes received so far. It is my intention to consult the Assembly in this regard on Thursday afternoon, 22 October 2006.

Agenda item 108

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256/Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.5)

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.4)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.7)

(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.6)

(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256/Add.1)

(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/61/185)

(o) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(p) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(q) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(r) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(s) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/61/184)

(t) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

The President: I give the floor to the Executive-Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Mr. Tibor Tóth, to present the report of the Preparatory Commission.

Mr. Tóth (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): I am pleased to report on the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The promise of this Treaty, as one of the cornerstones of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime, is the total ban of any nuclear explosion in any environment. My address to the General Assembly coincides, however, with a disquieting situation that is a strong reminder of the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it had conducted a nuclear test on 9 October 2006 resulted in global expressions of concern and condemnation with regard to this irresponsible act. Such a strong reaction of the international community is important and encouraging. It demonstrates how much the international community cares about the nuclear test ban.

On the occasion of a special session of the Preparatory Commission on 13 October 2006, the States signatories to the CTBT expressed their deep concern and regret over the test. I share those sentiments. Such an action goes against the letter and spirit of the CTBT, which I continue to hope the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will sign and ratify. The support demonstrated for the Treaty highlights the commitment of the international community to establish a universal and verifiable comprehensive nuclear test ban.

The announcement not only meant that the global moratorium on nuclear tests, which had been observed since 1998, was presumably broken, it also put our organization in the very sharp focus of attention. It was a test for our organization, our technical capabilities, our own procedures and the potential value that our global verification system can bring to States signatories. In the special session, States signatories expressed appreciation for the speedy provision of reliable and valuable data by the CTBTO's Provisional Technical Secretariat. As regrettable and disquieting as this new situation may appear, it is my hope that it will serve to refocus the attention of the international community on the relevance of the CTBT as a key disarmament and non-proliferation instrument and to underscore the urgency of bringing the Treaty into force and to complete work on the CTBT verification system.

The main activities of the Preparatory Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat over the past 10 years have been the promotion of the entry into force and establishment of the verification regime stipulated by the CTBT. There is significant progress to report concerning both.

To date, the Treaty has been signed by 176 States, 135 of which have already ratified it. The ratifying States include 34 of the 44 States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force. Since the CTBTO's last report to the General Assembly, two years ago, three States have signed and 16 States have ratified the Treaty.

In September 2005, 117 States participated in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, with 40 States being represented by their ministers or deputy ministers. The meeting was successful in producing a robust final declaration in which the ratifying States agreed that they would spare no efforts and use all avenues open to them to encourage further signature and ratification of the Treaty. This was followed on 20 September 2006 by a ministerial meeting in support of the CTBT, in which representatives of 61 States, including 22 ministers and deputy ministers, participated. The joint ministerial statement, which was welcomed by the Secretary-General, reaffirmed full support for the objectives of the CTBT and the work of the Commission. I would like to express my thanks for these and the many other initiatives in support of the Treaty.

The Provisional Technical Secretariat was mandated to establish an international monitoring system consisting of 321 monitoring stations using four technologies. Seismic, infrasound and hydro-acoustic stations are registering energy propagated through the earth, through the atmosphere and through the oceans. Radionuclide technology allows the analysis of radioactive particles filtered from air samples. Half of the radionuclide monitoring stations will also register minute quantities of noble gases present in the atmosphere.

The geographical distribution of the stations allows for complete global coverage by the system and, if I may add, includes some rather difficult locations for building and operating these stations.

It is the combination of these four technologies that should ultimately allow member States of the CTBT to make an informed judgement about events registered by our system. To date, nearly 190 stations are already providing data through the Global Communication Infrastructure to the International Data Centre, distributing data products to 780 institutions in 93 States signatories.

The CTBT verification technologies have the potential to offer important additional benefits derived from data from our monitoring stations and the activities of the International Data Centre. Our data can be used in a variety of fields, including studies of the earth's structure as well as for research on earthquakes, volcanic eruption forecasting, underwater explosion location, and sea temperature and climate change monitoring. During the past year, the Preparatory Commission has continued to discuss the potential contribution of data from the International Monitoring System, in particular in the context of tsunami warning. I am confident that the Preparatory Commission will soon approve a mandate to provide tsunami-warning organizations with relevant data on a continuous and real time basis. While we are mindful of the primary purpose of our verification regime, we hope to be able to further develop these important synergies between the CTBTO's unique capabilities and the scientific community for the benefit of all.

I wish now to highlight the participatory approach of our activities. Altogether, 90 countries are hosting our monitoring system stations, thus contributing to our verification capabilities. The benefits are shared by all, since data are made available to everyone in real time. The Preparatory Commission provides hardware and software, coupled with intensive capacity-building efforts, with the aim of further enhancing the ability of States signatories to make the utmost use of this unprecedented participatory data-sharing arrangement.

The Preparatory Commission continues to organize training programmes and workshops to support the enhancement of the national capabilities of States. These include training courses for station operators and managers and technical staff of National Data Centres, on data analysis, storage and management, the global communications infrastructure and technologies for use in on-site inspections. In the field of international cooperation, the Provisional Technical Secretariat continues its role as an information clearing house and provides support for the advancement of the Commission's work. These extensive outreach activities increase support for and participation in the work of the Commission, as well as serve to advance national implementation of the Treaty.

Following the adoption on 15 June 2000 by the General Assembly of the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, our relations and interactions with the United Nations and its programmes, funds and specialized agencies have intensified. Cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, including the three Regional Centres, is of particular importance to

the Commission. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department for its dedicated work.

The service agreement that the Commission concluded with the United Nations Development Programme provides us with operational support. The World Meteorological Organization is receiving data from the monitoring system for research purposes. Potential fields of cooperation are being explored with other organizations of the United Nations system. I would also like to highlight the growing cooperation with UNESCO in relation to our provision of data for tsunami warning purposes.

In order to contribute fully to the work of the United Nations family, the Preparatory Commission has requested full membership in the United Nations system's Chief Executives Board. That would not only allow for strengthened cooperation and synergies, but would also provide that body with essential expertise in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

I would like to close with a personal remark. The raison d'être of the CTBT is to establish a legally binding norm against nuclear testing and to set up a credible system to verify compliance with that norm. Verification of international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements is always difficult, slow and costly. But, at the same time, it is an important and worthwhile enterprise. I would like to thank all States that are supporting, in technical, financial and political terms, the development of our verification system. We will continue to do our utmost to live up to the high expectations with regard to our monitoring capabilities.

Ultimately, however, all our work — in particular, the sophisticated verification regime — will prove its worth only after the CTBT has entered into force. It is up to those States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT — whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force — to consider the Treaty's value in terms of both their national security and international security. The reliable performance of the verification regime and the example of a growing number of ratifiers will, I hope, help them to reach a positive decision.

The President: I now call on Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, to present the report of the organization.

Mr. Pfirter (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): Please accept my congratulations and best wishes, Madam, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. I should also like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his unanimous election as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Ban has demonstrated a strong personal commitment to supporting both the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). I therefore look forward to future cooperation with him in promoting peace and security, which are goals shared by the United Nations and the OPCW.

Just a little more than a week ago in the First Committee, I gave a detailed description of the present activities of the OPCW and underscored the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and my organization. Furthermore, as has been pointed out, the annual report of the OPCW's activities and programmes on the implementation of the CWC in 2004 and the draft report for 2005 have already been circulated. Today, I will summarize those aspects and explain some of the challenges that we face in implementing the Convention.

Let me begin by presenting an overview of the current situation. The disarmament and non-proliferation regime established by the Convention continues to grow in strength. The OPCW now boasts a membership of 180 countries or States parties to the Convention, which is equivalent to more than 90 per cent of the world's population. More than 2,600 inspections have been carried out by OPCW inspection teams at more than 1,000 sites in 76 countries. Nearly 85 per cent of the inspection resources are used to verify the destruction of chemical weapons, which in many cases is carried out 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Today, 15,094 metric tons of Category 1 and 2 chemical weapons have been certified by the OPCW as destroyed. That represents 21 per cent of the declared stockpiles worldwide. In addition, 12 destruction facilities are operating around the world, 10 of them continuously. More facilities will begin operations in the next three years.

Six destruction facilities are operating in the United States of America, and more than 37 per cent of its stockpile has already been destroyed.

The pace of chemical disarmament in the Russian Federation — which initially was rather slow — has now picked up significantly. The country has destroyed more than 6 per cent of its declared chemical stockpile. The remaining Russian stockpile of just over 39,000 metric tons of chemical warfare agents is scheduled to be destroyed by 2012. The authorities in the Russian Federation have been very clear in their pledge to fulfil their obligations under the Convention within the time frame and in the manner mandated by the CWC. I welcome that resolve and encourage further international financial support for the Russian destruction programme, whose completion will benefit not just the Russian Federation, but the world as a whole.

For its part, India has eliminated more than 67 per cent of its declared stockpile at a sustained pace. Another State party has irreversibly disposed of more than 83 per cent of its chemical weapons. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, having destroyed its entire stockpile of Category 3 chemical weapons, has started destroying its Category 2 chemical weapons. The elimination of its entire stockpile is set to be completed by 2010. Albania is due to start destroying its chemical weapons later this year and is expected to complete the destruction of its entire stockpile by the end of April 2007.

Given the large quantity of toxic agents, the high cost and the human and environmental considerations involved, the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles has, in certain cases, proved to be very challenging. As a result, five possessor States have requested extensions of their destruction deadlines, in some cases, until the final deadline of 29 April 2012. This most important matter will be considered by the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention at its eleventh session in December of this year.

Our verification efforts related to the prevention of any future proliferation of chemical weapons are proceeding equally apace. Here, too, the inspection record of the OPCW speaks for itself. We have completed more than 1,200 industry inspections and aim at gradually increasing the quality and the quantity of our efforts in this area. I will say more on this point later.

Over 98 per cent of the world's chemical industry is located in States party to the Convention, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and applaud once more the support the world's chemical industry has shown for the object and purpose of the Convention.

Significant progress continues to be registered in the key area of national implementation of the CWC by all States party to it. It is quite encouraging to note that by now the vast majority of States parties have now established a National Authority as required under Article VII of the Convention.

At the same time, a considerable number of countries continues to lag behind in meeting all of their national implementation obligations. The OPCW continues to play its expected role in assisting its member States in their national implementation efforts. In the last three years, more than 130 States parties to the Convention have received support in this field from the Technical Secretariat and from several other States parties.

With regard to international cooperation and assistance, I am pleased to report that, since 1997, about 5,600 participants have benefited from more than 500 activities in the area of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry. Our programmes have been made possible, in part, by generous voluntary contributions from a number of States parties and from the European Union. We are, of course, grateful for this support.

Concerning budgetary matters, I am pleased to report that this year the OPCW is operating with zero nominal budgetary growth, which implies a diminution in the assessed contributions of member States. We hope and expect that we can achieve such diminution in the budget for 2007, which is still to be approved by member States and which contains a proposal to this end.

This budgetary discipline has been achieved without any detriment to full programme delivery. In fact, the year 2006 saw an increase in the level of OPCW activities in a number of areas. As Director-General, I will remain committed throughout the period of my mandate to fiscal discipline and to best managerial and administrative practices.

The overview I have just given will, I hope, provide a good sense of the progress in implementing the goals of the CWC. However, much remains to be accomplished, and the challenges are many. For

instance, it is clear that, notwithstanding this progress and the unwavering political commitment of all our State parties, in the coming years we will need to overcome significant operational hurdles in the disarmament area.

The Convention, which entered into force in 1997, sets the ambitious target of eliminating a massive stockpile of chemical weapons within ten years, with the possibility of an extension for an additional five years. The final deadline, therefore, is 29 April 2012, date by which each and every chemical weapon declared by States party to the Chemical Weapons Convention needs to be destroyed. Of course, we are still five-and-a-half years away from that date. And it would therefore be ill-advised and premature to jump to any conclusions. In fact, I remain absolutely convinced of the strong determination of possessor States to complete destruction by that date.

At this stage, therefore, I would simply underline that ensuring the attainment of this singular landmark is central to the success of the Convention, and is thus of the greatest interest to the whole of the international community. While requests for extensions of the April 2007 destruction deadline are fully in line with the CWC and deserve every sympathetic consideration by States parties, all possessor States parties must plan their final destruction activities in a manner that fully respects requirements under the Convention.

The full implementation of the CWC, in particular, Article VII, by all States parties, is another important challenge. Without exception, all of our States parties are under an obligation to both adopt and enforce the legislative and administrative measures required to detect, pursue, and prosecute any breach of the Convention in any area under their jurisdiction or control.

To a great degree, these obligations are essentially identical to those stipulated in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

A further challenge facing the OPCW is the need for sustained and increased efforts in some categories of industry inspection. While we have been inspecting Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 facilities with sufficient frequency, I do not believe that we have done enough in relation to Schedule 3 plant sites and other chemical production facilities (OCPFs). Based on the declarations made by States parties, the Technical Secretariat has identified approximately 5,000 such production facility sites of relevance to the CWC.

It is true that, from a technical standpoint, these two categories of plant sites represent a less immediate problem with regard to the potential production of deadly chemicals. By the same token, however, some of them do produce or consume dual-use agents. That is why, under the Convention, they are declarable and, possibly, inspectable. Furthermore, the Convention does not say that they should necessarily be inspected less frequently than other categories of plant sites.

To date we have inspected only around eight per cent of all relevant facilities of that category. At the present rate, it will take us decades to inspect all of them at least once. This situation needs significant improvement. Furthermore, the need for action on such facilities is increased by the looming threat of chemical terrorism. On such basis, no lessening of attention in this regard could be expected from the Technical Secretariat. It is up to member States to take a political decision, if they so wish, in this respect.

Therefore, since becoming Director-General in 2002, I have consistently proposed through the OPCW budget, a larger number of OCPF inspections, and if my proposal for 2007 is approved, by the end of that year, we will have inspected approximately 11 per cent of all such production facilities. This verification activity will be done without any detriment to inspections elsewhere.

Universal adherence to the Convention is crucial to its success. Its object and purpose can be realized only if all States join in and fully implement its provisions. Indeed, even after completion of the destruction of all the declared stockpiles by all possessor States, the object and purpose of the Convention could be frustrated, if only a single State were to remain outside its jurisdiction. Technically, any such State could consider itself exempt from the ban on chemical weapons, hence preserving its ability to engage in forbidden chemical weapons programmes.

Although only fifteen Member States of the United Nations have yet to join, and some of them are taking steps to do so, there remains a small but significant number of countries whose continued non-adherence to the Convention is a matter of justified concern. Their reticence is often explained away as an unavoidable consequence of regional tensions or conflicts.

I do not agree at all with this line of thought, which seeks to legitimize a seemingly indefinite delay in joining the rest of humanity in banning forever an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In fact, given the wide recognition of the CWC, chemical weapons are not only unacceptable today, but they are unmistakably illegal under international law. It is dangerous and unfair to the rest of the international community that a few States should seem to be able to remain free from the obligation to be transparent in this very sensitive area. In the end, there is, and can be, no moral or strategic justification for keeping the chemical weapons option open.

One worrying example of what appears to be firm reluctance to join the Chemical Weapons Convention is the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which only a few days ago detonated a nuclear device, thereby incurring the unanimous condemnation of the Security Council as set out in its resolution 1718 (2006).

I regret to say that — alone among all other nations in the Assembly — the authorities in Pyongyang have not acknowledged any of the many approaches we have made to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to encourage its membership in the OPCW. That negative fact is all the more disturbing given the long-standing international concern about the possible existence of chemical weapons in that State. In fact, in paragraph 7 of resolution 1718 (2006), the Security Council decided that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea "shall abandon all other existing weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programme[s] in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner".

In that context, I would like to reaffirm once more that the OPCW remains available and ready to assist the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to join the Convention.

Additional concerns exist about the persistent refusal to join the Chemical Weapons Convention by some key countries in the Middle East. I once again appeal to those countries to become parties to the Convention without any further delay. All avenues for dialogue are open. One such opportunity will be available in Rome next week at an OPCW workshop on the universality of the Convention in the Mediterranean Basin. There we will engage in further dialogue with States in the Middle East not parties to the Convention. The workshop is being organized with the support of the Italian Government and the European Union. We extend our sincere gratitude to both. In addition, I am grateful to the Foreign Ministers of Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, each of whom has responded positively to my invitation to participate in the workshop and will be sending an official delegation. I also hope that we will be able to find other opportunities to continue our dialogue with Egypt, which did so much to bring about the satisfactory conclusion of the negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The success of the Convention also depends upon a partnership among the groups of States that make up its membership. Articles X and XI of the Convention, which cover international cooperation and assistance and economic and technological development, represent areas of particular interest. The OPCW must continue and, if anything, increase assistance and support to States parties in that context. Of course, I must recall that the interest of countries in that particular aspect of the Convention stems not only from our commitment to promote peaceful uses of chemistry but also from their own needs to address the increasing legitimate demands for capacity-building so that they can respond effectively to chemical threats, including those posed by terrorists.

The OPCW is not an anti-terrorism agency. However, it is clear that the full implementation of the Convention can contribute to the struggle against the scourge, as can be seen from Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and, more recently, General Assembly resolution 60/288, which sets out the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

One other matter that is crucial to the success of the Convention is the ongoing strong commitment by all States parties to work by consensus. It is very reassuring to note that that practice has continued, thereby strengthening our hope that the challenge posed by our Second Review Conference, which is to be held in 2008, will, like the first review, be crowned by success.

An additional challenge is the political and operational need to ensure that all the verification tools provided for in the CWC work as they should. One such tool is the challenge inspection, which is crucial to the ability of the OPCW to maintain a credible deterrent against an attack involving chemical weapons

on any of its member States. The secretariat will therefore continue to ensure that it maintains the technical and overall operational readiness to carry out a challenge inspection, should it be required to do so in accordance with the CWC.

Additional operational challenges lie in the need to ensure that inspection procedures are efficient and cost-effective. Other issues are the result of developments in science and technology. Just as important are the emergence of new chemicals, the grey area between chemistry and biology and the production of new types of weapons. All those are matters that could have a concrete impact on the operation of the Convention.

Allow me to conclude by recalling that the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC and of the establishment of the OPCW will take place on 29 April 2007. We trust that the Secretary-General will be able to join us on that occasion. Our States parties have every reason to commemorate with some satisfaction that important milestone in the history of disarmament. The CWC, and in particular its disarmament agenda, is being implemented effectively. We remain fully committed to the tasks entailed in achieving a world free of chemical weapons — a mandate that is promoted by the Charter of the United Nations and that serves the twin causes of peace and security.

As we approach our tenth anniversary, I would also like to express a final word of gratitude to all those States that intend to mark the occasion in a special way. Particular recognition is due to the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which is working in support of the CWC and the OPCW in an unparalleled fashion, and which is playing a crucial role in our commemoration next year. That is but another concrete demonstration of the Netherlands commitment to the success of the CWC and of the OPCW. In the same spirit, I would also like to express my thanks to the municipality of the city of The Hague, which is also supporting our commemoration and which spares no effort to make our lives comfortable in our home town.

The President: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.4.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The establishment of the collective approaches necessary for the effective resolution of contemporary threats and challenges requires a steady increase in cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations based — as set out in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) — on the solid foundation of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular on Chapter VIII. As Russia's Foreign Minister, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, emphasized when he addressed the Security Council on 20 September (see S/PV.5529), the United Nations and regional organizations must harmoniously complement each other by utilizing their relative comparative advantages.

With regard to the United Nations, that means the universality of the membership and its activities and its universally recognized legitimacy. In turn, regional organizations possess the best knowledge of the situations in the areas in which they operate. They often also have more sophisticated equipment and their own sources of financing. A clear division of labour — while preserving the prerogatives of the United Nations and the Security Council — will make it possible to increase the international community's crisis prevention capability. We believe that the regular meetings between the Secretary-General and leaders of regional organizations are extremely valuable.

The agenda for cooperation between the United Nations and regional partners is becoming broader and more multifaceted. In addition to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, there is also a need to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, stem illegal sources of small arms and light weapons, control other destabilizing cross-border programmes, fight drug trafficking and organized crime and help to resolve multifaceted socio-economic problems in the world.

We must strengthen cooperation between the Organization and regional and subregional groups. Cooperation must be intensified with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, among others. The League of Arab States also has an important role to play in finding peaceful ways to resolve many of the problems affecting the Middle East region. Cooperation should also be strengthened with the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of American States and other groupings in Latin America. We would also like to see further development of interaction with

the United Nations on the part of structures such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) when crisis response mechanisms are being set up.

Here too, it is essential to have full respect for the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, including the adoption of mandates for peacekeeping operations. The Russian Federation continues to promote deepened cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Euro-Asian Economic Community, which make significant contributions to the resolution of today's problems and challenges at the regional and global levels.

We welcome the already solid links between those regional mechanisms and the United Nations, as well as the joint implementation of a number of projects and programmes. Integration processes in our region are maturing, becoming ever more active and involving States from neighbouring subregions. There has been a dynamic growth in the legal, institutional and financial basis of such cooperation.

Within the CIS, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Euro-Asian Economic Community, systematic and comprehensive interaction is taking place, including in such areas as peacebuilding, economic development and trade, environmental protection, humanitarian response, controlling migration flows and combating organized, cross-border crime and similar problems. Particular attention is being given to strengthening the potential of member countries, especially in the execution of major infrastructure projects, such as the construction of hydroelectric plants and the expansion and improvement of road and railway networks.

We note in particular the cooperation between the United Nations and the CIS in the area of peacekeeping. The Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the CIS, in close contact with United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNMIG), is maintaining security and stability in the Georgia-Abkhaz conflict area in near crisis conditions.

Significant prospects also exist for the evolving cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). In that framework, intensive work is under away to create a CSTO peacekeeping potential, including for deployment in United Nations peacekeeping operations. After the establishment of relations between the CSTO and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and between the CSTO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, there is now a concrete possibility of cooperation in these areas.

A growing role in providing stability and security in the Euro-Asian region is played by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, whose members have said that they are in favour of developing cooperation with the United Nations in a number of crucial areas, including the fight against international terrorism, the illegal spread of drugs and the post-conflict recovery of Afghanistan. We welcome the dynamic process of strengthening cooperation between the Euro-Asian Economic Community and the United Nations, and we intend to continue to promote this.

At the same time, we believe that the potential for mutually advantageous cooperation between the United Nations and the integration mechanisms in the CIS area is far from being exhausted. In that context, we look forward to greater activity, more proactive approaches and increased openness to dialogue from the leadership of the United Nations agencies. Russia, for its part, is prepared to promote the further strengthening of those aspects.

A particular feature of my delegation's statement on this agenda item today is that this year the Russian Federation is not just the Chair of the Group of Eight (G-8), one of the major forums for agreeing upon and adopting collective decisions on problems of world development, but also Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC). Those international mechanisms are actively participating in building the new architecture of international relations. Although their areas of responsibility do not coincide, throughout our parallel chairmanships we have been conducting a kind of brainstorming process. We are trying to build a common understanding that narrow, bloc-based approaches to resolving problems of world development are not enough. Indeed, they are counterproductive and dangerous.

It is precisely in that spirit that we welcome this opportunity to analyse the level of cooperation between

the Council of Europe and the United Nations. We welcome the report prepared by the Secretary-General (A/61/256). We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the senior officials from the Council of Europe and delegations from its Parliamentary Assembly who have made a special trip to New York to participate in the Assembly's discussion of this agenda item.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is an example of long-standing positive relations between international organizations. The regular high-level meetings, the Council of Europe's increased contribution to major United Nations events and the unabated intensity of the Parliamentary Assembly's discussion of the question of cooperation with the United Nations are recent developments that have shown the great desire of the two organizations to have closer cooperation.

At the third Summit of the Council of Europe, which took place in Warsaw in 2005, member countries proclaimed their commitment to further strengthen cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations. The purposes of the United Nations with respect to maintaining international peace and security, resolving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and encouraging and developing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, are fully consonant with the purposes of the Council of Europe. At the regional level they are being achieved through efforts to embody universal values shared by States members of the Council of Europe, such as building a Europe without dividing lines on the basis of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, cultural diversity and social cohesion.

It is precisely in that spirit, and based on the provisions of the Action Plan of the Council of Europe, that the priorities were established for Russia's Chairmanship. Their practical implementation is being helped by the content of our programme, which we are trying to make as broad as possible, with as universally European a nature as possible.

The first of these priorities is strengthening national mechanisms for protecting human rights, developing human rights education and protecting the rights of national minorities. In order to guarantee human rights, the Council of Europe has long been closely cooperating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on questions of asylum, refugees and stateless persons without citizenship, as well as with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations is developing in the area of preventing violence against women and protecting children.

A top priority for the Council of Europe is the establishment of a common European legal space to protect individuals from contemporary challenges. In this context, the Council of Europe has made a significant contribution to global counter-terrorism efforts under the leadership of the United Nations. Conventions have been adopted on the suppression and prevention of terrorism and on the suppression of the financing of terrorism, and work is under way to protect the victims of terrorist acts and cyberterrorism. The activities of the Council of Europe in combating incitement to terrorism and the recruitment and training of terrorists are fully consonant with Security Council resolution 1624 (2005). Close contacts have been established with the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the legal services of the relevant organizations.

The Council of Europe continues to work to improve democracy and civil society and to introduce effective methods of governance; a significant contribution to addressing these issues has been made by the regular high-level tripartite meetings between the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

Among the priorities for Russia's chairmanship of the Council of Europe is the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding by developing dialogue and cooperation in the areas of culture, education, science, youth and sport. The Council of Europe is actively interacting with UNESCO, inter alia by creating an open platform for inter-organizational cooperation in the interests of intercultural dialogue.

During Russia's chairmanship, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe decided to support the Alliance of Civilizations initiative.

We believe that the development of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe will help to achieve peace and security and to protect human rights, not only in Europe but throughout the world. The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, which we will shortly be submitting to the General Assembly for

consideration, fully promotes those goals. That document notes the contribution made by the Council of Europe in areas such as combating terrorism and crime and developing democracy and effective governance. It encourages interaction between the two organizations and appeals for the further development of such interaction. The adoption of the draft resolution would help to bring the United Nations and the Council of Europe closer and promote the more effective implementation of their goals.

In conclusion, I would like to call upon all States members of the Assembly to support and further strengthen cooperation between the two organizations.

I would like now to focus on cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), of which Russia currently holds the chairmanship. During the 15 years of its existence, the BSEC has had a significant degree of success in attaining its basic goal: the effective promotion of trade and economic cooperation in the Black Sea area. The organization's authority has grown significantly, and its involvement in pan-European interaction is increasing.

In its capacity as Chair of the organization, Russia is seeking to do everything in its power to enhance its effectiveness and the practical results for member States. Our efforts are aimed at carrying out specific tasks in various areas, including transportation, communications, energy, tourism, environmental protection, emergency situations, counter-terrorism, organized crime and the prevention of outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases. Important steps are also being taken with a view to actively involving regions and the local authorities of member countries in the BSEC. We are trying to make the organization more attractive for community businesses.

It is my honour to introduce, under sub-item (d) of agenda item 118, draft resolution A/61/L.4, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization", which all members of BSEC, as well as other interested States, have sponsored. The draft resolution seeks to further enhance the effectiveness of cooperation between the organization and the United Nations, as well as the international financial institutions. It reflects the significant progress made, as well as the momentum achieved, by the organization since the adoption of the previous resolution on the issue. Particular stress in the draft is placed on the priorities of the organization's work. The text will definitely give additional impetus to the development of cooperation between the two organizations, as well as revitalize the work done by the organization to further adapt it to new socio-economic realities.

I would like to sincerely thank all States members of the organization for the spirit of cooperation that they demonstrated in the context of the events held during our chairmanship, as well as to thank delegations that participated constructively in consultations on the text. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The President: I call on the representative of India, who will introduce draft resolution A/61/L.5.

Mr. Anwar (India): India, which holds the presidency of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization this year, is happy to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.5 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) celebrated its golden jubilee in April this year at its headquarters in New Delhi. Over the past 50 years, it has acquired unique stature in the context of promoting legal cooperation among Asian and African States. Its annual conferences are major events. Its New Delhi session in April this year was well attended. The exchange of views that took place on contemporary issues of international law proved highly beneficial to participants.

Reports of AALCO and the declarations adopted at its annual sessions have become an important source for the development of international law. AALCO has been identifying the common interests of Africa and Asia with regard to issues under consideration in the United Nations and other world bodies.

We would like to encourage AALCO to expand its activities. This could be done through special training programmes for promoting teaching and expertise in legal advising in the area of international law; establishing Chairs in international law teaching in universities; offering fellowships to Asian and African students for higher studies in international law; and publishing books devoted to international law that are of interest to Asia and Africa.

Some of these activities can be carried out, however, only if more funds are available. The clearance of arrears in contributions and the raising of funds through voluntary contributions would help. The shifting of the offices of AALCO and the residence of the organization's Secretary-General to their own new building would partially ease the financial situation.

Despite its financial limitations, the work of AALCO is efficiently organized by a small band of experts working under its very competent Secretary-General. Its excellent library and facilities deserve to be further improved. In due course, AALCO could operate as an international law documentation centre for the benefit of Asian and African States.

We are optimistic that in the years to come AALCO will achieve greater success in promoting the common interests of Asian and African States. We have no doubt that the cooperation between AALCO and the United Nations will continue to grow stronger. We wish AALCO every success in its future work.

The President: I call on the representative of Italy, who will introduce draft resolution A/61/L.6.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): I will focus on sub-item (k) of agenda item 108 on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". As the Assembly knows, a draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) comes up every two years in plenary meeting. As members will recall, the last one was adopted in October 2004. The resolutions that are adopted for each organization are, in general, consensus resolutions. This has always been the case for the IPU, and we firmly believe that it should continue to be so.

In its capacity as the current holder of the IPU presidency, Italy has taken the initiative of sponsoring this year's draft resolution for the debate in the General Assembly. We, together with a large group of other member States — whose numbers are growing by the minute — submitted draft resolution A/61/L.6. I am pleased to recall that the list of sponsors is still open for signature at the Secretariat desk in this Hall.

Each new draft resolution seeks — and in this it usually succeeds — to carry the United Nations-IPU partnership forward, as is proved by the growing cooperation between the two organizations over the years. This year's draft resolution is inspired by the decisions taken at the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the report of the Secretary-General and the vision of the IPU President on building a strategic partnership between the United Nations and the IPU.

The operative paragraphs are based largely on the language used in the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). They are also inspired by the idea of further enhancing, within existing resources, the parliamentary dimension of the work of the United Nations as an important complement to its undisputed intergovernmental nature. The importance of enhancing the parliamentary dimension of United Nations activity must also be seen in the context of the current international situation, the role national parliaments play in the decision-making process of our Governments and the centrality they attribute to the role of the multilateral system and, within that, to the United Nations.

As an outcome of the consultations that we have recently been holding with a number of interested Member States, with a view of taking into account any possible concern, I would like to propose only a minor amendment to the seventh preambular paragraph . In particular, since the results of the wide consultation process undertaken by the IPU among national parliaments were not shared with the Member States through an official United Nations document, we propose to delete the last part, so that the paragraph ends with "the work of the United Nations". The seventh preambular paragraph would therefore read:

> "Taking note of the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations in regard to engaging parliamentarians more systematically in the work of the United Nations."

With this only minor revision, Italy is confident that this very important draft resolution can be adopted by consensus today.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, who will introduce draft resolution A/61/L.7.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): I should first like to congratulate the Secretary-General for having presented us, as usual, a through report on cooperation

between the United Nations and regional organizations, an area of topical interest to Romania. I shall dwell a bit on the item dealing with cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC). In that regard, Romania is satisfied with the draft resolution on cooperation with the BSEC, which we have co-sponsored. I wish at the same time to congratulate the Russian Federation, the current chair of BSEC, for having successfully promoted the resolution. The Black Sea area is now a region with tremendous potential for multiple cooperation and economic development. That is why Romania believes it is only right and timely that the United Nations focus more on cooperation in the Black Sea Basin. The draft resolution we are preparing to adopt proceeds from such an expectation and is, therefore, highly welcome.

Still, we have to acknowledge that the full take-off of the Black Sea Region in political and economic terms is seriously hampered by lingering conflicts, which are slowly but steadily getting worse. These prolonged conflicts affect the lives and aspirations of millions of people, including those in the separatist regions within this area. I do not intend to dwell more on these conflicts and the multiple challenges they generate, as there are regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), that give closer consideration to these issues, and they will be taken up in the Assembly at greater length later in the year, but I would like to point out that the community of Black Sea States can do more to alleviate these problems. We have to get out of what now seems to be a vicious circle.

Improving economic conditions for the whole region will certainly create a better basis for dealing with security issues, but no exemplary economic cooperation can be sustained in the face of the pending political and security problems. We have to concentrate on what is really important for people around the Black Sea, for that matter, for people all over the world. There is an enabling, safe, stable and prosperous future for the countries in the region and their citizens. Economic opportunities are there, and they are huge, but if they are to be taken advantage of fully, it is high time to address more resolutely the security challenges in several areas of the Black Sea Basin. Human rights are a fundamental prerequisite and must be given full observance and respect in the process.

Romania considers that the wider Black Sea Region today should be regarded in a broader perspective. Opening up cooperation in the Black Sea Region is a necessity. Thanks in particular to the efforts made during the chairmanship of Greece, the European Union (EU) has acknowledged the importance of a safe and stable Black Sea region for European security.

I wish to welcome, in this respect, the platform of cooperation between BSEC and the European Union to be submitted to the European Commission to get the EU much more involved in the wider Black Sea region, and especially in projects of economic and democratic development. We need to raise the profile of our region on the United Nations agenda and other international organizations, which have the capacity and will to enhance our cooperation, and to contribute to strengthening the future of the BSEC. They are all confident that the relations we are building within the region can become a success story. That depends on us, as directly interested parties, but also on our friends worldwide.

(*spoke in French*)

Now, I should like to turn to the task of introducing the draft resolution. I am speaking as the representative of the host country of the last summit of heads of State and Government of la Francophonie. In that capacity, it is an honour for me to take the floor on behalf of the sponsors to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.7, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie". My task has every chance of being successful as it is being carried out under the General Assembly presidency of an individual whose connection with the French-speaking world is well known.

I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the quality of the report contained in document A/61/256, prepared under agenda item 108, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations". Section J of the report, relating to the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), does justice to the wealth and intensity of the links established through time between this Organization and the organization of countries sharing the French language.

I would also like to pay tribute on this occasion to the Secretary-General of OIF, President Abdou Diouf,

for his dedication and his constant efforts to promote both the role of OIF and the development of its relations with the United Nations.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The draft resolution has 10 preambular paragraphs, and 18 operative paragraphs. The preambular part recalls the principles on which cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) is based. It also reflects the importance of regional cooperation in multilateral relations, the establishment and strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, access to new technology in the service of sustainable development, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity and dialogue between cultures and civilizations.

The operative part reflects the positive and constructive participation of the OIF in the work of the United Nations and cooperation between the two organizations in the area of conflict prevention and other areas of mutual interest, as well as the role played by the OIF in international conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations. The operative part also welcomes the work done at Bucharest at the eleventh Summit of la Francophonie on a subject of great relevance and pressing interest — namely, new technology in the service of education. It also refers to cooperation between the OIF and the United Nations, and between the OIF and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with a view to achieving development and poverty eradication.

In conclusion, the International Organization of la Francophonie, to which as of last month no fewer than 68 States and Governments belong as members or observers, plans to make a greater contribution, within its mandate, to the work of the United Nations and to the lofty objectives of promoting peace, democracy, full respect for human rights and equitable development for all. These are some of the reasons why it is my pleasure to extend an invitation to United Nations Member States of the General Assembly, on behalf of the sponsors, to give their full support to draft resolution A/61/L.7.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, who will speak on behalf of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (GUAM).

Mr. Khandogiy (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the GUAM countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Over the past few years, cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations has considerably expanded, strengthened and developed in a most constructive way. The GUAM countries firmly believe that the United Nations and regional organizations should complement one another harmoniously, using their comparative advantages.

We are confident that the activities of regional organizations can strengthen and reinforce a variety of critically important objectives of the United Nations, such as conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace and security, promoting democracy and human rights, countering terrorism and transnational crime and supporting economic development.

Allow me to touch upon issues of particular importance to the GUAM countries — cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), and emerging cooperation between the United Nations and GUAM itself.

The Kyiv Declaration on establishing the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, signed in May 2006, marked a new level in the GUAM integration process. By signing this Declaration, the Presidents of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova confirmed the desire of these States to promote democracy, stability and security, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, combating international terrorism, aggressive separatism, extremism and transnational organized crime, the deepening of European integration and the achievement of sustainable development and the well-being of their peoples, as well as resolving protracted conflicts.

The GUAM countries are of the view that peacekeeping is a very important part of the partnership of the United Nations with regional organizations, including the settlement of conflicts, post-conflict activities and peacebuilding. In this regard, we underline the need to enhance such cooperation in terms of finding solutions to the protracted conflicts in the territories of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Azerbaijan; these have

evolved over the past 15 years. It is critically important that the international community, in particular the United Nations and the OSCE, continue to take practical steps to settle these conflicts, which are among the most serious obstacles to stability, democracy and economic prosperity in our region.

In this regard, the GUAM member States are grateful to those States that supported the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly of a new item entitled "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development". It was an important step that will help us to focus the attention of the international community on the need for more effective steps in order to achieve progress in the settlement of conflicts on the territories of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova.

We call for the implementation of Security Council resolutions and decisions of the OSCE on the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, in Azerbaijan and Abkhazia, in Georgia, as well as the for realization by the Parties concerned of a plan for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia in Georgia, offered by the President of Georgia, and the initiative by the President of Ukraine on the Transdnistrian conflict in Moldova on a settlement through democracy.

The GUAM countries attach great importance to the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. With its vast geographical coverage, comprehensive approach to security, including the political, military, human, economic and environmental dimensions, and a unique toolbox of institutions, operations and mechanisms, the OSCE provides added value to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations.

Over the years, the OSCE and the United Nations have developed political and operational coherence in response to emerging threats to security and stability. The OSCE is committed to assisting in the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions in the area of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Cooperation is ongoing in the fight against organized crime, illicit arms trade and human trafficking; synergies exist in the spheres of democratization, strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights. We also welcome the concrete practical outcome of cooperation between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, which has taken the form of joint projects. We support further development of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, where the OSCE has accumulated unique experience and expertise through its specialized institutions and field presence.

Let me now turn to the subject of cooperation between the United Nations and BSEC. The GUAM countries welcome growing cooperation, both in quantity and quality, among the member States of BSEC. In recent years, we have witnessed an increase in and a greater positive contribution of BSEC activities to the strengthening of the economy, security and stability in the region. The BSEC continues to extend its efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in various fields, including energy, transport, trade and economic development, banking and finance, communications, environmental protection, among many others.

Since the issues of energy security are among the most important for Europe today, the Black Sea-Caspian region is of special significance for security and for the stable transportation of energy resources to Europe. The GUAM States are ready to take an active part in promoting energy projects within the framework of the BSEC. We are also convinced that the BSEC should provide effective support to the efforts of the world community aimed at combating terrorism, resolving the protracted conflicts in the region and combating transborder crime. It is necessary to coordinate BSEC activities with corresponding programmes supported by the United Nations, the OSCE, the European Union and NATO.

Better cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is a work in progress. Today, we have significant practical experience to build upon. With the overall goal of enhancing international peace and security and ensuring real impact on the ground, GUAM and its member States remain committed to further improving cooperation with the United Nations and regional organizations in the future.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Papua New Guinea, who will speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I present this statement on behalf of the members of the Pacific Islands Forum group based in New York: Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Papua New Guinea.

At the outset, I thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/61/256 and Add.1). My intervention is focused on sub-item (r) of agenda item 108, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum".

The theme that the President of the General Assembly has chosen for the sixty-first session, "Implementing a global partnership for development", is a very appropriate one in the context of the deliberations on this agenda item. Our limited economic resource base and our remote location across the Pacific Ocean, coupled with a lack of technical expertise, of institutional and administrative capacity and of the financial resources needed to address the many multifaceted challenges in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, make it imperative that we collaborate with the United Nations system and other development partners.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum has gained momentum in recent years. However, there is room to strengthen our relations and to build on the progress made so far. That is demonstrated by the increased interaction and collaboration among the United Nations Secretariat, the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat and other agencies of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific, such as the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Forum Fisheries Agency. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness forms the overarching umbrella for the United Nations strategy in the Pacific. We welcome the forthcoming United Nations strategy for the Pacific region and the United Nations development assistance framework.

In that connection, we encourage continued regular consultations between our Forum's secretariat and the United Nations, as well as United Nations participation in meetings of Pacific Islands Forum leaders, with a view to fostering closer partnerships through knowledge-sharing and cooperation on key strategic areas such as terrorism, international peace and security and trade.

It is our collective desire to strengthen those relations in our need for a partnership to address the ever-growing challenges before us, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015; to carry out our sustainable development agenda, including the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; and to contribute positively to international peace and security, including by implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and by addressing the challenges relating to small arms and light weapons.

At the forefront of the partnership between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum are the Organization's 14 development agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme. We are indebted to those agencies for their commitment and service in responding to our development challenges on a daily basis.

Further examples of collaboration between the United Nations system and the Pacific Islands Forum are reflected in the Secretary-General's report. These include the successful mission in Bougainville, thanks to the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville and the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; the development of joint proposals to complement the activities of the Government of the Solomon Islands and the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands; the vital role of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic; and the efforts of other United Nations agencies in undertaking important programmes and initiatives in our region.

Such programmes complement the activities enshrined in our Pacific Plan, which is the overarching

framework for collaboration and cooperation among the Pacific Islands Forum countries. The Pacific Plan is geared towards the security, good governance, economic growth and sustainable development of our region.

As equal members of the United Nations, the Pacific Islands Forum countries deserve a fair hearing from the United Nations system, which is reflected by an in-country United Nations presence and by the provision of quality support for our development efforts. Certain Pacific nations, such as the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, have a very minimal United Nations presence on the ground or none at all. That makes it difficult for those countries to receive the support needed to make progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and the fulfilment of other internationally agreed commitments and obligations.

Nevertheless, we are grateful for the Secretary-General's decision to establish a United Nations presence in those countries and to expand the Organization's in-country presence in Solomon Islands, through proactive engagement with UNDP and other agencies. We thank the Secretary-General for that important initiative and trust that the necessary formalities will be completed as soon as possible.

Our people must see activities on the ground that give practical effect to the Pacific leaders' vision of a region that is respected for the quality of its governance, the sustainable management of its resources and the full observance of democratic values, as well as for its defence of human rights. Our people must participate in activities and projects that provide them with economic, social and political security. To that end, it is important that the international community urgently address our communications and energy challenges and provide for alternative economic opportunities that will support and enhance the sustainable management of scarce resources.

The undertaking of concrete projects and programmes that address those concerns and improve the livelihood of the people is a litmus test for the validity of such partnerships. We must sustainably manage our resources, improve decision-making to achieve results and avoid creating unnecessarily cumbersome bureaucracies that have little impact in terms of delivering concrete projects in our island communities.

With a view to strengthening the ongoing collaboration between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, we will present a draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum". We would very much appreciate the unanimous support of all delegations, expressed through the adoption of the draft resolution.

Mrs. Ferrari (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): It is an honour to speak, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), in this debate on sub-item (e), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", of agenda item 108.

First, I would like to reiterate the appreciation of the Caribbean Community for the role played by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti during a difficult time for that country. CARICOM reiterates its call upon the United Nations and the international community to turn their attention to assisting Haiti in its development efforts.

CARICOM continues to utilize a variety of approaches for meaningful interaction with the specialized agencies and institutions of the United Nations to address the development needs of CARICOM member States. These institutional arrangements are characterized by considerable flexibility designed to enable the region to benefit maximally from the competences, capacities and comparative advantages of the United Nations system.

CARICOM member States continue to have access to the technical, training, advisory, operational and financial resources provided by various United Nations agencies to individual countries and subregional groupings, as well as the CARICOM secretariat and other CARICOM institutions with region-wide mandates and responsibilities.

The thematic conferences convened by the United Nations system, including special sessions of the General Assembly — for example, the United Nations Millennium Summit, the follow-up conference on financing for development and the special session on HIV/AIDS — have also been central forums for the discussion of critical development issues, the formulation of policy recommendations and the mobilization of resources. Those mechanisms

exemplify the coordination of effort needed to facilitate the convergence between the objectives, priorities and capacities of the international community and the critical development priorities identified by the Caribbean Community.

In keeping with the agreement reached between the representatives of CARICOM and the United Nations system when they met here in New York in April 2004, the region sought the support of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in a number of priority areas. The first was assistance to facilitate the implementation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, in particular in the areas of infrastructure for a common capital market, the financial services sector and tourism; to develop national integration and public education programmes; and to strengthen CARICOM's legal systems and institutions.

The second priority area was the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, particularly in the context of the 10-year review conducted in Mauritius in January 2005 and its follow-up. Efforts to implement resolution 54/224, in particular to promote an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea in the context of sustainable development, constituted the third priority area.

The fourth area was increased cooperation on disaster reduction and management, including flood-hazard management, capacity-building, hazard mapping and vulnerability assessments. The fifth area was support for the implementation of the Action Plan of CARICOM's Regional Task Force on Crime and Security. The sixth area was a continued focus on HIV/AIDS, access to care and treatment and an integrated multisectoral approach to prevention; increased control of chronic non-communicable diseases; and the impact of social inequity on human and social development within and between countries.

The Community is pleased with the response by the relevant United Nations agencies to these critical areas in the region's development and counts on the continuing support of the United Nations.

The issue of crime and security is also of key importance to the Caribbean Community. The use of small arms and light weapons in illegal criminal activities throughout the Caribbean clearly proves the need for a concerted and sustained strategic programme over time to address the growing availability of illegal firearms.

In addition to this, the region has been plagued by the increase in the illegal cultivation, production, extraction, manufacturing and processing, as well as trade in and transhipment, of narcotic drugs. This, coupled with activities associated with money laundering, has the potential to undermine the economies of our countries. The initiatives of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), working in partnership with other regional and international bodies, have been critical for the region. Given the role played in the past by these agencies, the region believes that the closure of UNODC by end of this year will be detrimental. Our ministers have pleaded for its retention, and the CARICOM region hopes that those pleas will not fall on deaf ears and that the United Nations will review that plan.

As indicated in the report, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) continues to provide technical support to the countries of the Caribbean. CARICOM looks forward to the intensification of the work by ECLAC, in collaboration with the CARICOM secretariat, the Caribbean Development Bank and other regional agencies in analysing issues of relevance and importance to the economic and social development of the region, in supporting the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, in strengthening the region's statistical base, economic forecasting and modelling capabilities and in analysing macroeconomic, trade and sectoral policies.

The region intends to enhance its level of collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 2007 and 2008. The CARICOM secretariat has approached that agency for support for its development agenda and is making the case for special and differential treatment for small economies in the context of the Doha development trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization, as well as in the areas of services, investment, and agriculture and non-agricultural issues.

The Caribbean Community continues to collaborate with UNESCO and UNICEF. In this regard, it is anticipated that those agencies will continue to

provide valuable support to the region, particularly through technical assistance to countries in the development and implementation of policies, standards and regulations and in the adoption of guidelines for a comprehensive policy, minimum standards and a regulatory framework for early childhood development services.

CARICOM looks forward to continued collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, which has provided extensive support to the Caribbean region in addressing its environment and sustainable development goals and in the implementation of both the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius international Strategy. In this regard, we wish to acknowledge the strengthening of the unit dealing with small island developing States in the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean through the provision of additional technical resources to assist the region, the consolidation of the Caribbean small island developing States programme and the provision of dedicated resources to facilitate its implementation in the region. We believe that that programme, which was recently endorsed by CARICOM ministers for the environment, can provide a framework which can be used as the basis for the development of a comprehensive environmental and sustainable development programme for Caribbean small island developing States. It can also provide a vehicle to begin to pool resources in a complementary and comprehensive manner.

Collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the area of food security is ongoing through the Italian Government's contribution to the FAO Trust Fund for Food Security. Through this collaboration, the Community has been in a position to upgrade its Regional Food Security Programme, and to focus on the implementation of the Jagdeo Initiative with respect to the transformation of the region's agriculture sector. This has assisted each Member State in developing its own medium-term agricultural sector framework and in identifying bankable investment projects.

The FAO also spearheaded, in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the development of preventive measures against the avian flu, and a three-year project to that end has been established.

The Caribbean Community welcomes the close working relationship that has been established between the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the CARICOM-Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS in the implementation of regional projects financed by the World Bank. It is expected that this collaboration will continue in other areas related to health. The region also looks forward to developing similar strategic partnerships with the relevant agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme as it seeks to address the issues of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension, areas which CARICOM heads of Government have agreed should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

In conclusion, the Caribbean Community has benefited immensely over the years from meaningful cooperation and collaboration with United Nations system agencies. CARICOM looks forward to continued close collaboration with the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the promotion and implementation of the development efforts of our region.

The CARICOM secretariat and the United Nations Department of Political Affairs have been in consultations on arrangements for the proposed fourth general meeting between representatives of CARICOM and its associated institutions and the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The CARICOM secretariat looks forward to hosting this meeting early in 2007.

We will be introducing a draft resolution in the near future entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", and we would look for support for it from all Member States of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, who will speak on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium): Belgium, in its capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), highly values the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

In January 2006, my Minister, Mr. Karel De Gucht, briefed the Security Council on the programme of action of the Belgian chairmanship. He reiterated

our commitment to close cooperation during his participation last September in the Security Council debate entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and other intergovernmental bodies in maintaining international peace and security" (see S/PV.5529).

The secretariats of the two organizations had fruitful staff level meetings in May of this year and the OSCE participated actively in the seventh high-level meeting between the United Nations and the regional organizations. Several high-level representatives of the United Nations attended meetings and seminars organized by the OSCE, thereby showing the depth of contacts and cooperation between the two organizations.

On 16 March 2006, the Permanent Council of the OSCE formally adopted a declaration on cooperation with the United Nations. In this declaration, the OSCE affirmed its readiness to continue playing its role as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, in the context of the framework for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations as enhanced under the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit and Security Council resolution 1631 (2005). The Council further called on the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Chairman-in-Office and the Permanent Council, as appropriate, to take steps to further strengthen cooperation in this regard.

In order to further underpin this close cooperation, a General Assembly resolution on the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE would be more than welcome. It was not possible, however, for the General Assembly to adopt such a resolution at its fifty-ninth session, nor at its sixtieth session. Belgium, as Chairman-in-Office, will continue to work towards such a resolution during the current session of the General Assembly.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan, who will be speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as on behalf of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Mr. Mammadov (Azerbaijan): Today, I have the honour to speak on behalf of two organizations, namely, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I am currently the Chairman of both organizations.

In my capacity as the current Chairman of the OIC group at the United Nations, it is a great honour to address the General Assembly on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference". I would like to convey the greetings of the Secretary General of the OIC and to wish the Assembly every success in its work at the sixty-first session. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to the President and to her colleagues in the Bureau for steering the work of the Assembly so successfully. We are confident that the session will be very ably directed under her leadership.

We have read with interest the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/61/256. It contains informative details pertaining to the ongoing cooperation between our two organizations during the period under review. I wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for this important and valuable report and for his leadership role in enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations in areas of common concern. We would also like to commend the Secretariat for its part in the preparation of the report, which also includes contributions from other bodies of the United Nations system.

As in previous sessions, the Secretary-General's report is devoted to the status of implementation of programmes and activities in priority areas of cooperation jointly developed by our two organizations and their respective agencies and bodies during the period under review. As the report reflects, the progress of implementation is encouraging. On behalf of the general secretariat of the OIC and its specialized institutions, I would like to reassure the General Assembly that we remain dedicated to the joint tasks we are pursuing.

In my capacity as the current Chairman of the OIC Group at the United Nations, I would like to inform members that a draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference" has been distributed among the United Nations Membership. Next week, we will hold informal consultations on the text. Today, I would like to draw the attention of the

Assembly to two particularly significant operative paragraphs in the text.

First, the draft resolution highlights the efforts of the OIC Secretary General in strengthening the role of the organization in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in member States as well as in conflict situations involving Muslim communities. In that regard, we would like to affirm that the Secretary General of the OIC will continue to play an active role in these areas in our common search for solutions to these important global problems.

Secondly, our two organizations are requested to continue to maintain close and multifaceted cooperation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. In that regard, operative paragraph 2 of the OIC draft resolution encourages the United Nations system, its funds and programmes, and the specialized agencies to continue to expand their cooperation with the subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions of the OIC, particularly in the implementation of its 10-year Programme of Action.

The Ten-Year Programme of Action of the Organization of the Islamic Conference reviews the most prominent challenges facing the Muslim world today, such as combating terrorism, good governance, human rights, poverty alleviation in Africa and higher education, science and technology. The Programme of Action also includes ways and means of addressing these global issues objectively and realistically, in order to serve as a practicable and workable programme for all OIC member States.

In this regard, with the development of the Ten-Year Programme of Action, we look forward in the future to further strengthened, better coordinated and mutually cooperative interaction with the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in their respective areas of interest.

I shall conclude my statement on the same note of hope and expectation, as I have done in past years, for future cooperation between our two organizations in all areas of common concern and in the best interests of our member States. We appreciate the fact that, in his report, the Secretary-General highlighted these aspects of the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC. The levels of cooperation between the two bodies are thus duly described.

As the current Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Azerbaijan stands ready to deepen the existing levels of cooperation between the two organs on regional, as well as global matters of concern. We pledge to the General Assembly the full and continuous cooperation and support of Azerbaijan and the OIC.

Azerbaijan attaches great value to cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Indeed, the ECO region has a vast potential and comparative advantages in a number of areas, such as human and natural resources and in scientific and industrial capacity, among others. The ECO is ready to engage in constructive dialogue with the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders on how to explore and utilize these resources.

Blessed with these advantages, we are committed to reinforcing our efforts to turn the ECO into a demand-driven organization, with tangible economic results that would benefit member States and the region as a whole. In our view, in order to realize untapped potential and achieve tangible results, we should pursue cooperation in such priority fields as transport, trade, energy, agriculture, tourism and information and communication technologies. I would like to call upon the international community to support the efforts of the ECO in this regard.

I would also like to inform the Assembly that Azerbaijan, in its capacity as Chairman of the ECO for the current year, is pleased to submit the agreed text of a draft resolution (A/61/L.8) on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization, which we believe will be adopted by consensus.

In my national capacity, I would like to say that Azerbaijan attaches great importance to its cooperation with a number of regional organizations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This year, close cooperation continued between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the OSCE. Joint conferences, seminars and other activities were organized and projects were implemented. It is important that such measures and projects be reflected in the report of the Secretary-General.

This year the preparation for an environmental operation to be conducted in the fire-affected occupied

territories of Azerbaijan can be pointed out as one of the important areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. In accordance with resolution 60/285, as an initial stage of the environmental operation, an assessment mission was conducted by a group of international experts, led by the OSCE, in the fire-affected territories of Azerbaijan in early October of this year. The objective of the mission was to assess the short- and long-term damage inflicted on those territories by the fires and to prepare recommendations for the forthcoming environmental operation. The close cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee of the Permanent Council of the OSCE in the preparation of the assessment mission should be especially highlighted.

One important issue related to cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE is the fight against religious intolerance and discrimination. This is particularly critical in the light of anti-Islamic manifestations around the world. The OSCE approaches the issue of combating Islamophobia through the prism of negative manifestations of discrimination and intolerance against all religions. We believe that coordination and cooperation between the relevant bodies of the United Nations and the OSCE in this area should be strengthened.

The Council of Europe is another organization of which Azerbaijan is a member, and we also attach great importance to our cooperation with this organization. Considering the fact that conflict resolution is not within the mandate of the Council of Europe, cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is limited to conflict prevention. In this regard, we propose that cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe in the area of conflict resolution be maintained in fields such as the protection of human rights, humanitarian, environmental and social issues, as well as early prevention and elimination of the negative consequences of conflicts.

In conclusion, let me assure the Assembly that Azerbaijan will do its best to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau, who will speak on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): The United Nations Charter, in particular its Chapter VIII, acknowledges the role of regional organizations. This role has grown to a level of importance never before equalled and is becoming even greater, given the regional nature of most conflicts. This confers upon regional organizations a responsibility that they must fully assume.

This is true, for example, of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The role of ECOWAS has frequently been commended by the international community, notably by the Security Council.

It is my honour today to speak on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), over which my country has presided since last July. The CPLP is very pleased about the relationship that exists between the United Nations Secretariat and our organization. This cooperation has grown to include an ever-larger number of activities.

Since the CPLP obtained observer status, this cooperation has become stronger and has extended, inter alia, to the specialized agencies. In the context of ongoing training, for example, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has decided to hold seminars with a view to ensuring that young people, especially those coming from African countries such as ours, are familiarized with the workings of international trade and, in the interests of our respective countries, to better follow ongoing negotiations at the world level.

But that cooperation is not limited to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has also recently done similar things; in granting assistance mainly to Portuguese-speaking African countries, the FAO has decided to provide assistance so that we are in a better position and have better tools to manage the soil and land, for example, and to adopt land-use regimes that are consistent with our country's needs.

In addition, we recently had an opportunity with UNESCO, to commemorate Portuguese-language Day in the context of the struggle we are carrying out to ensure that multilingualism is a reality, in particular

within the United Nations system. The International Labour Organization is also helping us to combat the exploitation of young people — in particular children. Here, speaking on behalf of the countries I represent in this forum, I must emphasize how happy I am about the exemplary nature of our cooperation.

The role of regional organizations, as just noted, is of vital importance bearing in mind that conflicts are most often of a regional nature. As far as those of us within the CPLP are concerned, we also hope to make our contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

In short, all conflicts, whether localized within our countries or within our regions, call upon our attention in many ways. We have decided, therefore, to ensure that our cooperation with the Secretariat, among others, develops further. In that context, the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries has consistently sought to ensure that that cooperation is active and, if possible, exemplary.

Again, I wish to welcome the report of the Secretary-General. Its content emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations agencies and programmes and regional organizations and others. The statements we have heard this morning confirm our belief that it is necessary to see such cooperation develop further, in order to better respond to the aspirations of the peoples we represent and to address appropriately the enormous set of tasks that is the responsibility of the United Nations. However, we, the Member States, represent the United Nations and we are, therefore, the United Nations and share that responsibility. I can say that we are willing to share that responsibility and to assume it fully.

Once again, speaking on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, I must say how happy I am that our cooperation is so exemplary, and I wish to express the hope that our cooperation will grow ever stronger and extend to new areas that are even more useful to our respective countries.

Mr. Gross (Switzerland): Please let me first express my gratitude to the Government of Switzerland, which allowed me to speak in its place without having to speak in its name. I have the honour to address you as a Swiss member of parliament and a member of the Swiss delegation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. I am proud to do this for the second time because, after quietly following the General Assembly's deliberations from the sidelines up in the gallery ten years ago, I then returned home to launch the idea of a citizens' initiative in favour of Switzerland joining the United Nations and thus correcting the negative vote on the matter we had 20 years ago. This political project, as you know, turned out to be successful in 2002.

As you know, the United Nations and the Council of Europe were born following the same catastrophic experiences and tried to draw the same lessons from them. They each joined the national forces to establish intergovernmental political bodies in order to prevent similar disasters from happening again. The Council of Europe's ten founding States — Turkey was one of them, Switzerland then again needed a little bit more time — followed the founders of the United Nations four years later. But they took from the beginning the common introductory reference to our respective founding charters more seriously. The Council of Europe translated the reference "We the Peoples" not only into a governmental body composed of ambassadors representing Governments — the so-called Committee of Ministers — but also a Parliamentary Assembly of members of the national parliaments, thus associating directly elected representatives of the peoples in the supranational political endeavours.

The political will of the pioneers of the European Integration process was at that time also strong enough to create the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg, where, since 1959, every citizen of a Council of Europe member State — today nearly 800 million people in soon to be 47 States — can submit complaints against the rulings of their highest national courts for violations of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The decisions of the Court have to be respected by the authorities of every State — the unique creation of a supranational authority accessible by hundreds of millions of people. It showed how courageous the European pioneers were at that time, and how far they were ready to go in order to overcome the atrocities committed by nation States not yet civilized by human rights and international law.

In the context of the 2005 summit of the Council of Europe, one of the foreign ministers described the

Parliamentary Assembly as "the true engine of the Council of Europe". The Prime Minister of Luxembourg showed in his report this spring that it was the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that was, much more than others bodies, the true defender of the basic values, as well as more courageous and innovative than other bodies of the institution. Speaking about a report on the institutional balance of the Council of Europe, which was discussed just two weeks ago in our week-long autumn session in Strasbourg, our Austrian colleague, Peter Schieder, who is also present here today, noted that it is the first embodiment of the progress of the democratic spirit in international relations.

I would like to underline that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is not simply an annex to a primarily governmental organization that meets only a few days in a year, listens to officials and decides on resolutions. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is a genuinely transnational parliament that meets four times a year for a whole week and works between sessions in ten committees that meet about six times in addition to the sessional meetings and to whose resolutions and recommendations the Committee of Ministers is obliged to defer and respond. This has created not only more than 200 conventions — a genuine pan-European space with a common understanding of human rights, democracy and the rule of law — but also a genuinely transnational parliamentary discourse, exchange and learning process that is able not only to bring legitimacy to transnational law and policy-making but also to directly shape national legislation and governmental accountability.

You are certainly aware why I tried to show you the usefulness and the great merits of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the parliamentary assembly of an international organization that was created to represent the peoples. I would like to suggest further consideration of lessons we could learn from this successful pan-European experience, so as to introduce an elaborated and robust parliamentary dimension to the United Nations — a parliamentary dimension that goes beyond the respective bodies and other international organizations.

It would also be worthwhile to elaborate a parliamentary dimension that is integrated into the structures of the United Nations, interacts on the basis of specially designed procedures with the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the General Assembly, and which might provide a legitimacy only elected members of parliament may provide.

A parliamentary dimension that allows for the openness, frankness, critical thinking and straightforwardness which characterize parliamentary debates on global issues and concerns would be invaluable, and would produce greater innovation and creativity than other forms of debate. Such a dimension demonstrates what Pericles recognized 2,500 years ago, namely, that a tough debate is the most important precondition for making a wise decision.

Finally, the ideal deliberative body would also include a parliamentary dimension which would provide the basis for successfully countering the criticism that Governments and administrations prefer to work with non-governmental organizations and corporations, rather than democratically elected representatives at home.

There are many different ways to start a process to implement a parliamentary dimension within the United Nations. For example, on the basis of several meetings and existing reports, the United Nations could annually address transnational parliamentary bodies in various regions around the world, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Doing so would stimulate the creation of such bodies as we know already exist in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Incidentally, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is already taking such steps with the Parliamentary Assembly and with members of parliament from our observer States. Japan, Mexico and Canada are participating regularly in these parliamentary screening efforts by the OECD.

The General Assembly could also agree to create a sister chamber composed of delegates — perhaps not directly elected among parliamentarians from all Member States since such a body would quickly become too large — from the transnational parliamentary bodies of the major regions of the world, for example, the parliamentary assemblies of the Council of Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. The United Nations would then undertake proceedings to create duties and obligations for all its bodies to cooperate with a new United Nations parliamentary chamber.

I am of course aware that such changes require great political will, including the will of Governments

to share power with parliamentarians on the transnational level. If this will does not exist, the hegemony of Governments on the transnational level would continue to undermine the power of national democracy and national parliaments. Historically, this kind of will arose only after catastrophes and only in order to prevent new ones from emerging.

Today we cannot grant ourselves the dubious privilege of learning only in the context of catastrophes. For this reason, I wish us all the strength to learn and to reform power structures without the need to be pushed to do so by a new global catastrophe. While such an approach might be much more challenging and time-consuming, its great advantage would be that nearly all of us would be able to participate actively in a reform that is so much needed for the sake of this unique world and of humanity.

Mr. Abdalhaleem (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to welcome and thank the heads of the regional organizations who are in New York today.

First of all, I would like to refer to one passage from Chapter VIII of the Charter which was adopted by the founding fathers of this Organization, as follows:

> "Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action, provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations."

I would also like to recall the World Summit Outcome, which was adopted by heads of State or Government at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly held in this Hall in September 2005. That document reaffirmed the importance of multilateralism in confronting the challenges of our time. It also noted the increasing role played by regional organizations in terms of international peace and security, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter, which requires the promotion of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Addressing issues of peace and security is a joint responsibility of the United Nations and regional organizations. Because of their direct links and their geographical proximity and cultural and social characteristics held in common with States that suffer from conflict, regional organizations have shown that they can find common ground and political agreement through dialogue. I would recall, for example, the experience acquired by the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States. Herein lies the importance of developing or reviving cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations pursuant to agreements that take into account the hierarchy of institutions and the complementarity and coordination of roles.

Among the most positive recent practices we have seen in the context of the reform process are the periodic meetings between the Secretary-General and regional organizations, an annual event held in parallel with the Security Council's meeting with representatives of regional organizations for the purpose of studying all aspects of cooperation, including cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Within the context of the relationship among these various mechanisms and coordinating structures, the United Nations must now set its priorities, first among which is the promotion of the capacity of regional organizations and, particularly, the African organizations, in peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

We are not talking about regional organizations that have significant resources and capabilities at their disposal, such as NATO, the Organization of American States and the European Union. Rather, the African Union possesses young institutions, such as its Peace and Security Council, the development of whose capacities and resources should be a priority. Trust needs to be built among these various institutions so that they can play their proper regional role in building and keeping peace in Africa, a continent which suffers from many conflicts and civil wars.

The second priority of the United Nations in this context is the promotion of dialogue and coordination to avoid shortcomings, bridge gaps and address urgent matters. That requires urgent action, enormous resources, humanitarian intervention in some conflicts, and financial, technical and logistical support. The regional role should be complemented, not competed with. We support all of these practical relationships and, in keeping with Chapter VIII, Article 52, of the Charter, "The Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements".

Thirdly, financial support for training and exchange of expertise on the ground is very important; such activities should take into account the peacekeeping experience the United Nations has acquired. That support should build capacity in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, activities which need significant resources and capacity.

Fourthly, it is crucial to have special support for proactive monitoring and early warning systems for the prevention of conflicts or anything that endangers international peace and security within the specialized roles of regional organizations.

These organizations have to play a greater role in enshrining these principles of coexistence and collective security. The signing on 9 January 2006 of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army is proof of the peacebuilding capacity and effectiveness of regional organizations when they receive international support, particularly from the United Nations, donor nations and influential partners.

The signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement is further proof of the capacity of African States to build peace. Clearly, the party that achieved the Peace Agreement — and that supported it when it was just a dream — is in the best position to ensure its implementation, more so than any other party to the Agreement, particularly if it receives proper support within the context of international cooperation.

Mr. Mansour (Islamic Republic of Iran): After sixty-one years of invaluable experience in the United Nations system, many feel that regional arrangements play a crucial role in the harmonization of nations around the globe and in giving shape to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the decisions of its entities. Therefore, cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations could lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency of those arrangements in achieving the goals they envisaged.

There is no doubt that any endeavour on the part of the United Nations to identify and remove barriers to cooperation will contribute to ensuring that this body will meet the challenges it faces. In that context, I would like to make several points concerning cooperation between the United Nations system and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which was granted observer status to the United Nations in 1993.

The Economic Cooperation Organization, whose membership includes 10 countries in Central, Southern and Western Asia with a combined population of more than 400 million people, has indeed entered a new era and is flourishing, as it develops new initiatives and programmes in the economic, social and environmental fields.

The establishment of the ECO Trade and Development Bank, the entry into force of the Framework Agreement on Transit Transportation, the operationalization of the ECO Fund for the Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the reform in the internal structure of ECO are among the most important and recent developments in the organization. The signing of the ECO Trade Agreement by the member States and its enforcement hopefully by the end of December 2006 will, it is hoped, make the year 2006 a turning point in the history of the organization. The Ministerial Meeting of ECO, held on 26 September 2006 here in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, placed emphasis on the significance of the cooperation between ECO and the United Nations system.

Fortunately, ECO member States have prepared themselves for such cooperation by making the decisions needed to strengthen relations between ECO and other regional and international organizations.

Recently, the Council of Ministers adopted the framework of the ECO Plan of Action for the enhancement of ECO external relations. In addition, the Department of Human Resources and Sustainable Development was recently established in the ECO Secretariat. That measure is another step to follow up on ECO-United Nations cooperation, particularly in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the region.

Implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General contained in document A/61/256 is crucial for the achievement of ECO projects and programmes. In that document, the Secretary-General recommended that various specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and relevant international financial institutions consolidate their efforts and extend technical and financial assistance

towards the implementation of ECO programmes and projects.

We firmly believe that consideration and adoption of the proposed draft resolution on cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the United Nations, during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, will be beneficial to the work of both organizations.

Mr. Awad (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt is honoured to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States", on behalf of the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The draft resolution we have just submitted on behalf of those Arab countries concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States recognizes the need to increase and strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies, in order to obtain the objectives shared by both organizations. We commend the efforts made by the League of Arab States to strengthen multilateral cooperation among Arab countries, and we urge the United Nations to continue supporting those efforts.

The objective of the draft resolution, as requested by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, is to continue to work to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in order to fulfil the purposes and principles stipulated in the United Nations Charter, as well to strengthen international peace and security, economic and social development and disarmament, and to put an end to colonization and to promote the right to self-determination and the elimination of all forms of racism and racial discrimination.

We would urge all United Nations specialized agencies and funds and programmes to strengthen cooperation and dialogue between the United Nations and the Arab League, in particular in the priority sectors, namely; energy, rural development, combating desertification, green belts, technical and professional training, the transfer of technology, the environment, the media, trade, finance, water resources, agricultural development, the advancement of women, transport, communications and information, strengthening the private sector and strengthening and building capacity. Lastly, the draft resolution calls for regular consultation between representatives of the secretariats of the two organizations to review and strengthen coordination mechanisms between the two organizations.

I shall now discuss Egypt's position concerning cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. Since Egypt is an African, Arab and Islamic country, a founding member of the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and a member of the International Organization of la Francophonie, we are convinced of the importance of regional interagency cooperation as the basis of multilateral international action. We therefore wish to stress the special importance of the Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/1/256) in the context of rapid international developments. Such cooperation requires that we strengthen the concept of dialogue in order to prevent confrontation and war and to support peaceful coexistence at the political, economic and social levels.

In that regard, I should like to focus on a number of areas of cooperation between the United Nations and these organizations and groupings that serve as examples to guide us in attaining our objectives in various areas.

With regard to the economic and social aspects of such cooperation, it has become more urgent to strengthen mechanisms for regional and subregional dialogue and cooperation to address the great demographic growth that is now imposing a heavy burden on natural resources and their sustainability, compared with what the world was like at the time when this Organization was founded. We will not be able to achieve security or stability unless there is socio-economic development in Africa and on all other continents.

We are following very closely the tireless efforts by United Nations programmes and funds throughout the world, particularly in Africa. However, we wish to recall that the African continent is the only region of the world that will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on time. That is why we would like the Secretary-General to submit practical proposals

aimed at strengthening inter-agency cooperation between United Nations bodies and those of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) during the present General Assembly session and next year's. We expect the Assembly to honour the commitment undertaken at the 2005 World Summit to support NEPAD and not hold back the financing of that task when the Organization's programme budget is adopted, so that commitments undertaken in other forums can be implemented.

At the political level, with regard to strengthening the concept of collective security from a regional perspective, the African continent is in urgent need of capacity-building in the area of peacekeeping. We hope that the Secretary-General will submit a comprehensive study on the 10-year programme adopted at the 2005 Summit to build Africa's peacekeeping capacity. That is essential not only to restore stability, but also to strengthen African ownership of the process of conflict management and settlement. In addition, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations Democracy Fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund will help to promote democratic change and economic and social development in Africa. We therefore look forward to cooperation and complementarity between all those mechanisms and the relevant African institutions, including the African Union, NEPAD and the Economic Commission for Africa.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States is key to the strengthening of dialogue and cooperation in a vital area stretching from the Arab Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean, through 22 Arab States. Those States are within the mandate of two regional United Nations commissions — the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and the Economic Commission for Africa. In addition to the political cooperation between those two bodies, which dates back to their establishment, those efforts include managing the conflicts in the Middle East, including the Arab-Israeli conflict, and addressing the situations in the Sudan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa. Cooperation also includes information technology, empowerment of women, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and other development areas referred to in the Secretary-General's report.

We emphasize the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League with a view to strengthening dialogue and contacts in various areas of common interest, particularly Arab-African, Arab-Latin American and Arab-Chinese cooperation and other transregional cooperation frameworks that strengthen contacts among States, peoples and cultures.

There are now more than 1.2 billion Muslims throughout the world. They are brought together under the umbrella of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which has become a main framework for cooperation. Those relations are strengthened through the United Nations at a time when the tone of militancy in the dialogue among cultures and religions is intensifying. The OIC seeks to strengthen the settlement of differences and explain different conceptions and visions in order to bring people together in tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Joint efforts must be undertaken to address the great apprehension of Muslims in the East and the West with regard to religious discrimination. The OIC is playing a major role in that regard, which, together with its role of promoting peace, will enable it to serve as an institutional donor to the Peacebuilding Commission. The OIC is also playing an important role in South-South cooperation within the United Nations.

Among the member States of the Internationai Organization of la Francophonie, Egypt is one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations. We would like to see greater cooperation in that regard in relation to conflict prevention and peaceful dispute settlement, which is a common denominator of United Nations action.

The delegation of Egypt was a sponsor of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (A/61/L.6), which was introduced a short while ago by the representative of Italy. Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has become a tangible element enshrined in General Assembly resolutions and in action carried out in accordance with a programme established at the level of the parliaments of member States to bring views closer together and to clarify different conceptions. Hope was expressed at the 2005 World Summit that such cooperation could be strengthened. That hope was echoed recently in resolution 60/286, on revitalization of the General Assembly.

Strengthening the dialogue between the General Assembly and the IPU in political affairs will have a positive impact with regard to the situation in the Middle East, Iraq, the Sudan and Afghanistan. It will support the Organization's efforts to reach a political settlement to those problems, which are destroying lives and property

at a time when the world's peoples aspire to freedom, justice and development in accordance with their own vision and their free will.

We also welcome dialogue between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations bodies such as the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and other international forums, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Lastly, we would like to express our hope that the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General will contain practical and enforceable proposals on cooperation between the United Nations and all regional and other organizations and that the proposals in the report will not be limited to the Inter-Parliamentary Union only. Such cooperation should be strengthened through annual dialogue between the General Assembly and heads of the regional organizations and their secretariats. This will help to enrich cooperation in all its aspects.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As globalization grows ever more deeply rooted, our world is getting smaller and smaller, with more and more problems that call for concerted action by all countries. As the most representative international organization, the United Nations is now facing a greater need to strengthen its cooperation with regional and other international organizations to promote world peace and security and the common development of humankind. For this reason, the Chinese delegation welcomes the General Assembly's deliberations on this important agenda item, "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations".

Allow me to comment, in particular, on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). AALCO is the only intergovernmental legal consultative organization in the Asian and African region. Here, we cannot fail to recall the famous Bandung Conference, held some 50 years ago: AALCO represents one of its most significant achievements. Over the years, the spirit of unity, friendship and cooperation advocated by the Bandung Conference has been a source of inspiration for Asian and African countries.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of AALCO. At its forty-fifth annual session last April, member States gathered together to celebrate the occasion. Several months have elapsed, but the fond memory lingers. As a regional organization operating in the legal field, AALCO has been carrying forward the Bandung spirit over the past 50 years in providing a forum for exchanges and cooperation on international legal matters among Asian and African countries and assisting them in engaging in international legal practices, while promoting, through its activities, the progressive development and codification of international law.

Over the years, AALCO has been following the work of the Sixth Committee and the International Law Commission. Many important international legal issues have been the subject of focused discussions in the organization, including the work of the International Law Commission, the Law of the Sea, international cooperation in combating trafficking in women and children, international legal instruments in the anticorruption field, measures to eliminate international terrorism, and the World Trade Organization's framework agreements as a code of conduct for world trade. The comments or proposals by AALCO on these questions have served as an important reference for Asian and African countries participating in related General Assembly deliberations, and even for the work of other legal organs of the United Nations.

In today's world, Asian and African countries have made significant progress in political, economic and social areas, concurrent with a marked elevation of their standing and role in international affairs. They have become an important force for world peace and common development. Accordingly, Asian and African countries will continuously broaden their participation in international legal affairs and take a more effective part in the process of democratization and rule of law governing international relations. As a legal consultative organization of Asian and African countries, AALCO is poised to play a more active role in this regard.

As a member State of both the United Nations and AALCO, China attaches great importance to the AALCO and is most supportive of its work. I wish hereby to reaffirm that the Chinese Government will, as always, continue to contribute to the close cooperation between AALCO and the United Nations and other related organizations.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/61/PV.39

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

39th plenary meeting
Friday, 20 October 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 108 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256/Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.5)

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.4)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.7)

(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.6)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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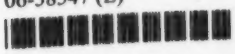

(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256/Add.1)

(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/61/185)

(o) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(p) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(q) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(r) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

(s) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/61/184)

(t) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256)

Mr. Uras (Turkey): Turkey strongly believes that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations contributes to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In that context, we welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/61/256 and Add.1) on agenda item 108, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations".

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization was established in 1992, at a time when the world in general and Europe in particular were being shaken by great political changes. It was founded as a unique and promising model of a multilateral economic initiative aimed at fostering interaction and harmony among member States, as well as at ensuring peace, stability and prosperity by encouraging friendly and good-neighbourly relations in the Black Sea region. Since then it has developed into a full-fledged international organization, with its charter entering into force in 1999. Turkey, as the host country of its headquarters, is pleased to note that, during the 14 years of its existence, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization has, in its own way, been instrumental in contributing to efforts to increase stability in the region through expanded economic cooperation.

The geographic area covered by the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization encompasses the territories of the Black Sea littoral States, the Balkans and the Caucasus, comprising an area of nearly 20 million square kilometres. It represents a region of some 350 million people, with a foreign trade capacity of over $300 billion annually. After the Persian Gulf region, it is the second-largest source of oil and natural gas, along with its rich proven reserves of minerals and metals. It is rapidly becoming Europe's major transport and energy-transfer corridor.

Even though it covers a complicated geographical and geostrategic area — with its well established legal, institutional and procedural framework — the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization sets the pace for cooperation among its members. Following the mandate given to the organization by its summit in 2002, it has expanded its activities beyond the traditional areas of regional economic cooperation. With its new mechanisms and instruments, such as the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and the Project Development Fund, the organization has been supporting significant progress in such areas of cooperation as trade, banking and finance, transport, energy and electricity networks, science, statistical data, combating organized crime and simplification of cross-border and customs procedures.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendations set out in the report contained in document A/61/256, regarding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. We share the view that the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system should continue to cooperate and hold consultations with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and formulate and implement joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest, including the implementation of cooperative agreements.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, also requires enhanced cooperation and results-oriented collaboration between international and regional organizations. With that understanding in mind, Turkey has advocated the deepening of the relations between the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the United Nations system, as well as with other relevant international and regional organizations, particularly international financial institutions. We firmly believe that further cooperation with the United Nations will undoubtedly help the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization to reach its goals.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I would like to begin by associating Solomon Islands with the statement delivered by the representative of Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum group of States. I would like to take this opportunity to make some general remarks in my national capacity in connection with sub-item (r) of agenda item 108, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum".

Solomon Islands welcomes the Secretary General's report (A/61/256 and Add.1) on the opportunities and challenges of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and intergovernmental organizations. It gives us the opportunity to review and reflect on the health of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as to consider ways and means to further strengthen interaction between intergovernmental entities.

Solomon Islands is equally pleased to note that six high-level meetings have been convened since 1994. That satisfies Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations and translates into action the 1992 *Agenda for Peace*, which supposedly gave birth to regional and global partnership.

Solomon Islands is a country made up of numerous islands. As a small island developing State, we have found strength through cooperation, both as a necessity and as a means of doing more for our people. We look to all forms of cooperation for solutions — at the subregional, regional and international levels. Solomon Islands feels that cooperation between the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations has made great strides in a number of areas.

However, more needs to be done. I say that against the background that the five members of the Pacific Islands Forum are classified as least developed countries. My own country is emerging from a conflict situation which took place six years ago. The subregion has been identified by the United Nations as being off track in terms of meeting its Millennium Development Goals. Recently the Asian Development Bank made the same assessment.

The 2005 Millennium Summit Outcome document provides an excellent basis for United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations to define their cooperation. The Summit document emphasized development as a means on maintaining international and regional peace.

In examining chapter XII of the Secretary-General's report, which deals with United Nations cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum, Solomon Islands notes, and remains thankful for, the role of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, the United Nations Development Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum mission to observe April's elections in Solomon Islands. We are also grateful to the United Nations Development Fund for Women's various programmes, as well as for the UNESCO programme in our country regarding the development of media in conflict areas.

However, my delegation is concerned that cooperation between the United Nations and our regional organization tend to be on the latter chapter of the Summit Outcome document. There is more focus on governance and security issues, with almost nothing on development. Unfortunately, this trend, if not arrested, will bring insecurity, both regionally and globally, since we all operate in an interdependent, international system.

The Pacific Plan referred to in the report of the Secretary-General is based on four pillars, namely, economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. The first two pillars have not received due attention in current cooperative arrangements. I would like to name a few of the current cooperative arrangements mentioned in the report. These include the workshop on peacebuilding and conflict prevention, the workshop on building capacity to implement Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, the workshop on ethics and accountability, the leadership programme with the University of the South Pacific, regional training for trainers for local elected leaders, a peer review of Pacific Island Forum counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime legislation, among others.

Solomon Islands appreciates these workshop and training opportunities, but we must move forward with the development challenges of our time. Solomon Islands has placed development high on its agenda here at the United Nations; hence, we would like to see outcomes of the United Nations high-level meeting and Millennium Summit processes mirror the Organization's cooperative arrangements with regional organizations. In this regard, my delegation would like to see the Brussels Programme of Action given the same level of attention as the Millennium Development Goals.

At the regional level, renewable energy and telecommunications are some of the sectors where cooperation could be enhanced and explored. These are some areas where we have regional polices, although we do not have the resources to nationalize and localize them. These are development challenges where South-South cooperation could be initiated with United Nations assistance.

Trade is another area that needs support. Despite regional trading arrangements, there is little trade happening between the Pacific Islands countries, given the fact that we all are producing similar products. With food security programmes of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, we could reduce food imports and spend more on our commitments to the MDGs.

Cooperation in the Pacific region is of great strength and breadth. As a recipient country of regional cooperation arrangements, through the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), Solomon Islands has seen its national challenges addressed regionally over the past three years. The RAMSI arrangement is a comprehensive package that has various elements of peacebuilding, peacekeeping and nation-building, all rolled into one. Solomon Islands remains committed to this arrangement and would like to see the partnership reviewed in an effort to have it more development-focused. My delegation takes this opportunity to thank Australia, New Zealand and all of our Pacific neighbours for their support and contributions.

Finally, I wish to assure you, Madam President, of Solomon Islands' commitment to making our Organization an effective international tool for cooperation. We acknowledge that the upgrading of the United Nations presence in Solomon Islands through the United Nations Development Programme will further enhance cooperation between the United Nations, Solomon Islands and the region as a whole.

Mr. Korga (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like, once again, to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/61/256), which, inter alia, reports on activities conducted by the United Nations in its relations with the African Union (AU).

Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union goes back to the first days of our independence. Based on the Charter, cooperation between two organizations, which are committed to the same ideals and pursue the same objectives, has enabled them to pool their efforts in order to work effectively to safeguard and consolidate peace and stability and to ensure economic and social progress on our continent.

In the report under consideration, the Secretary-General emphasizes the importance that the United Nations attaches to such cooperation, which has grown stronger over the years. The contribution of the United Nations to the transformation of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) into the African Union and to the establishment of its institutions, the creation of an Office of the Special Adviser for Africa, the participation of the United Nations in the formulation of the strategic framework for the African Union and the decisive part it took in mobilizing international efforts for the New Partnership for Africa's

Development (NEPAD) are all eloquent illustrations of this, and Togo can only welcome it.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union today deals with a broad range of issues — peacekeeping operations, strengthening African capacity in this area and close cooperation in the sphere of disarmament — and these have always been at the core of our relationship.

With regard more specifically to disarmament, a special concern for my delegation, I would like to recall that in resolution 40/151 G of 16 December 1985, the General Assembly decided, within the framework of the Secretariat, to create the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions that Member States might make to that end. The establishment of the Regional Centre was in response to an urgent need to promote the objectives of peace, disarmament and development in Africa. Since that time, this institution in Lomé, acting in cooperation with States and regional and subregional organizations of the continent, has conducted activities that have made a great contribution to the quest for solutions, to challenges facing our countries, especially in the area of combating illicit trafficking and the proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons, all of which are factors that destabilize our States.

We, as sons of our continent, realize the special importance for our countries in the Lomé Centre, since we know that every day unprecedented threats to the free world are becoming clearer. It is strange to say, but it is precisely in this context of uncertainty that the Regional Centre seems to have been abandoned to its own devices, with serious and recurrent material and financial problems, which are a real risk and hinder the accomplishment of its mission for peace and stability in Africa.

Referring to the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/137), we note that during the period from July 2005 to July 2006, enormous uncertainty has continued to threaten the functioning of the Regional Centre, because of the constant reduction in voluntary contributions in support of its activities.

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for establishing a consultative mechanism for the re-organization of the Lomé Centre in order to explore ways and means that could help to put things in proper perspective. We look forward eagerly to the conclusions and recommendations of this group, which should, logically, provide guidance to the international community on the need to revitalize the functioning of the Centre by allocating sufficient human, financial and material resources to it.

As I have just emphasized, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa has been experiencing material difficulties, in particular because of the sharp decline in voluntary contributions to its Trust Fund. In spite of the situation, this institution has attempted, as best it could, to implement its work programmes in the major areas defined in its mandate, inter alia, peace and security, arms control and disarmament and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society.

Togo, for its part, and pursuant to the host country agreement signed with the United Nations, extends and will continue to extend its full support to the Lomé Centre. Thus, in addition to its voluntary contribution, Togo grants material and logistical benefits covering the rent for the building and for the residence of the Director, and for electricity, water and telephone usage. The total cost of those allocations amounts to approximately $40,000 per year.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa is a manifestation of the determination of the international community. We cannot hide indefinitely behind resolution 40/151 G — which, by the way, gives rise to different interpretations — to leave the Centre without resources. At a time when that institution is preparing to commemorate its twentieth anniversary, the international community should reaffirm the relevance of its mandate. Member States should give serious thought to the possibility of a United Nations budgetary contribution to its functioning. That is why my delegation places a great deal of hope in the consultative mechanism that the Secretary-General has recommended for renewal. We have confidence in it, given what is at stake, so that its work leads — as I said a moment ago — to specific recommendations likely to bring about a definitive solution to the Centre's current situation and to enable it to carry out its mandate in the service of peace and disarmament in Africa.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): The African Union (AU) is now a dynamic organization, spearheading the development of Africa under well-defined structures. Among them are the Peace and Security Council and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Under the Peace and Security Council, issues of peace and security are being tackled systematically. Africa has realized that it should take ownership of security issues. It pioneered the concept of intervention in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and declared categorically that sovereignty cannot be invoked to protect those crimes. World leaders gathered in New York in September 2005 echoed this, reflecting it in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

In order to fulfil its mandate in security matters, the African Union needs to work closely with the United Nations. The two organizations should play complementary roles. They need each other to promote international peace and security on the African continent. Without abdicating its primary responsibility under the Charter for maintaining peace and security, the United Nations, through the Security Council, can, acting under Chapter VIII of the Charter, delegate some of its functions to the African Union on the principle of subsidiarity. The African Union is better placed to handle some of the conflicts, using its well-established structures and local knowledge.

The Economic Community of West African States has been able to handle conflict situations in the west, and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has made remarkable achievements when a comprehensive peace agreement was signed between the Government of the Sudan and the Southern Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement. In Burundi, under the regional initiative chaired by Uganda, peace has been achieved at last. The AU peace contingent in Darfur is courageously trying to maintain peace and security under difficult circumstances, though it lacks financial resources to carry out its mandate. The United Nations, working with the African Union, can devise a proper mechanism to achieve peace in Darfur. In the case of Somalia, we call on the Security Council to lift the arms embargo partially to enable IGAD to deploy forces in Somalia to stabilize the transitional Government.

On the economic front, the African Union, under NEPAD, is tackling the issue of development. The United Nations, through the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Economic and Social Council, should continue to extend a hand to these efforts. The Peacebuilding Commission should also work closely with appropriate AU mechanisms to address issues of post-conflict development and rehabilitation.

Another area of cooperation between the two organizations is migration and development. Remittances from migrant workers are becoming an important source of financial resources for the African continent. Uganda hails the historic recent High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/227 of 23 December 2005. A follow-up dialogue should be held in the near future with the AU accorded a prominent role in its organization and work, given the fact that historically, from the days of infamous slave trade to the present day, immigrants from the African continent have played a significant role in the development not only of the world economy but also the economies of African countries.

In order to further strengthen cooperation between African Union and United Nations, there should be regular informal discussions or dialogue between the two organizations. For instance, the AU Peace and Security Council could hold informal sessions with the Security Council at agreed-upon intervals.

Mr. Snoussi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): My delegation attaches major importance to our debate today on cooperation between the United Nations and the regional and other organizations. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the information he has provided on this subject.

Regional cooperation, whose structure and scope has become increasingly multidimensional and integrated, constitutes more than ever an instrument that complements the activities of the United Nations and the evolution of multilateralism. Developments on the international scene show well the links of synergy and interaction between the universality of the United Nations and the regional dimension. That is where the goal of full cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations takes on its importance and pertinence.

It is known that the regional organizations play a central role in world governance and thus should be

integrated as full partners to the work of the United Nations. The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document stressed the importance of measures to reinforce cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and recommended that such measures be identified and adopted.

As a member of a number of regional organizations, Tunisia believes that the report of the Secretary-General shows a real will on the part of the United Nations to strengthen, in various fields, its cooperation with these regional organizations. We welcome this development. It is an effort that should be recognized as this effort would achieve more success if further supported and better targeted.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, whose vitality and solidity we acknowledge, covers a number of fields and levels, particularly as concerns peace, stability and security. The 2005 Cairo meeting on financing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2006 Vienna general meeting on the joint evaluation of achievements in the economic and social fields also shows this concern with strengthening the scope and foundations of cooperation.

In the economic and social sphere, my delegation welcomes the progress achieved and hopes for cooperation between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States. The League's structures should be better coordinated and receive greater support, particularly in terms of financial and operational resources. We also recommend the establishment on a regular and predictable basis of greater coordination and evaluation.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its appeal for better cooperation with the African Union and its institutions, particularly since Africa enjoys priority on the agenda of the United Nations and that of the international community, in the light of its special needs and challenges. The African Union, which has proven its effectiveness when it has received support, does not have sufficient resources to confront all situations. Hence the needs for the United Nations and the international community to further enhance its support.

I would like to stress the role of the African Union, notably its Peace and Security Council, a structure that should be strengthened at the material, political, judicial and institutional levels. In this context, better-structured cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations is required in order to contribute to the establishment of an improved African capacity for conflict prevention and the maintenance and consolidation of peace. Without a commitment from all partners of Africa and the African Union, particularly the United Nations, the ambitious objective of Horizon 2010 — an Africa without conflict — will be a difficult achievement.

Before concluding on this point, I would like to express the respect and admiration of the Tunisian delegation for the efforts made by the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General for Africa, whose job, inter alia, is to deal with the relationship between the United Nations and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and whose office deserves to be further reinforced. In this context, the United Nations and the international community strengthen national and regional capabilities to help implement NEPAD, which is a comprehensive, integrated programme for development for Africa and a base of cooperation for its partners.

My delegation takes note with satisfaction of the continuing cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on many important economic, political, social and humanitarian questions. As voice of the Muslim world, the OIC and its institutions are deployed in many fields and with many partners to contribute to the efforts of the international community in the service of development, peace and security. My delegation believes that, bearing in mind the importance of the Muslim world on the international scene and its capabilities to serve humanity's objectives, the consolidation of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC would provide greater means to achieve our common objectives.

In conclusion, the general debate of this session of the General Assembly is taking place under the theme of "Implementing a Global Partnership for Development." My delegation is convinced that a strengthened partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations is one of the pillars of this world partnership.

Finally, my delegation hopes that the Secretary-General, in his next report, would formulate recommendations and action plans and not confine

himself solely to a description of the activities of cooperation that have already been achieved.

Mr. Capelle (Marshall Islands): The Republic of Marshall Islands wishes to align itself with the statement made by Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum group, based in New York, urging the General Assembly to continue to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

Member States of the Forum, including the Marshall Islands, are often challenged by their remote geographic location, small size or exposure to natural hazards. In addition, many Forum members, such as the Marshall Islands, are uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise and climate change. Citizens of certain PIF member States risk becoming the world's first environmental refugees. The remote geography of many PIF nations also creates hurdles which interfere with economic development, education and poverty reduction. Certain Forum nations, in particular the Marshall Islands, continue to struggle with the devastating environmental, social and public health impacts of nuclear weapons testing. Regional coordination is critical in meeting th::se challenges.

The Pacific Islands Forum provides a comprehensive regional strategy to counter these pressing challenges by linking the regional framework of regional universities, technical organizations and national Governments with development and environmental agencies. Global development and security goals are defined within the unique regional and cultural character of Forum member States.

Member States of the Forum are also a truly global asset. Forum States, including the Marshall Islands, feature some of the world's greatest biological and cultural diversity. Nations of the Forum serve as gatekeepers and stewards for much of the world's marine biodiversity. Their citizens speak over 1,200 distinct languages and proudly maintain unique cultural traditions tied to island geography and environment. Increasing United Nations cooperation with the Forum will help ensure a more unified and balanced approach within the region to enhance, rather than diminish, these invaluable resources.

The Forum plays an integral role in the development and implementation of the Pacific Plan, a far-reaching regional strategy that advances sustainable development, economic growth, sound governance and security. Ongoing coordination with the United Nations has already yielded positive results, including collaborative efforts of the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies with the Forum to ensure close coordination of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the Pacific Plan. In addition, workshops, policy studies and demonstration projects sponsored by the United Nations have enhanced regional understanding of conflict prevention, ethical elections, gender issues, communication technology and poverty reduction.

Noting the importance of the United Nations cooperative relationship with the Forum, we urge the General Assembly to continue to build a stronger alliance with our group. Within the immediate future, Forum members will wrestle with increasingly complex economic, environmental and political questions.

Too often, international development and reform efforts have lacked a coherent regional focus or have failed to define solutions within the context of traditional local culture. By utilizing the regional expertise of the Forum, the General Assembly will ensure that the implementation of international policy will become a successful reality. The establishment of a stronger physical United Nations presence — including programme staff or development offices — within Forum nations that have expressed the need for such a presence would greatly advance the meaningful realization of the partnership between the United Nations and the Forum.

The United Nations has before it a valuable opportunity to place key global issues — such as climate change, sustainable development, poverty reduction, and ethical governance — within the context of the improved regional coordination of the Pacific Island's Forum.

Mr. Zewdie (Ethiopia): My delegation is taking the floor to express its views on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. In that regard, I intend to comment briefly on sub-item (a) of agenda item 108, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union", which is well addressed in the reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/61/256 and A/61/204.

It is a stated objective of the African Union to encourage international cooperation in light of the Charter of the United Nations with a view to promoting peace, security and stability on the continent. The African Union is making great strides in attaining that stated objective. It is cooperating with the United Nations and other organizations so that Africa can achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development can be implemented, the continent can become free of conflicts and other desired goals can be achieved.

Notwithstanding those positive developments, Africa is facing immense challenges, which the continent cannot confront alone. In that regard, it is worth mentioning that half of the world's conflicts and peacekeeping efforts are in Africa and that sub-Saharan Africa remains behind other regions in achieving the MDGs. Therefore, it has become extremely important that the United Nations give priority to Africa. That is also the main reason why cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union has become more imperative today than ever before.

There are instances in which the African Union and subregional organizations are well placed to resolve conflicts. There are also situations in which the United Nations peacekeeping mechanism must become more efficient. However, when the situation demands it, cooperation between the Union and the United Nations produces a better result at lower cost, and united action should come to the fore.

The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations has been more recognized by the international community during the current decade than at any time before. As a result, during the 2005 World Summit our heads of State and Government called for a number of measures to strengthen such cooperation. In particular, the Summit emphasized cooperation with the African Union and forged a 10-year capacity-building plan. In that regard, my delegation encourages increased assistance to the African Union in the area of peacekeeping operations in general and strengthening the African standby force in particular.

My delegation noted a number of positive recommendations cited in the report, aimed at further strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations and making it more fruitful. In that regard, my delegation especially supports the recommendations aimed at strengthening the Union's capacities in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding.

Mr. Cho Hyun (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/61/256 and Add.1), which informs us of many significant developments during the past two years in the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. That is an issue to which the Republic of Korea attaches great importance.

Global issues such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, development, climate change and environmental degradation are universal, but they affect different geographical regions in distinct ways. Accordingly, regional organizations are often well suited to offer region-specific remedies and approaches that can reinforce global efforts to address those issues. In that regard, the United Nations should continue to strengthen its cooperation with regional and other organizations. A holistic approach, encompassing both global and regional perspectives, is vital if we are to fully address the many issues of common concern.

I would now like to draw the Assembly's attention to the regional organizations and arrangements in East Asia. As a full dialogue partner of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and a member of ASEAN+3 and the East Asian Summit, the Republic of Korea welcomes increased interaction between the United Nations and ASEAN. The second ASEAN-United Nations summit, held here in New York in September last year, was a good example of close cooperation between those two institutions. The Republic of Korea expects the summit to develop into a regular channel for discussing the common concerns of ASEAN and the United Nations.

Moreover, I would like to note that the regional seminars held since 2001 — including the fifth ASEAN-United Nations regional seminar on conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, held in South-East Asia in May this year — have been especially valuable in enhancing mutual understanding. Likewise, we warmly welcome ASEAN's decision to request observer status at the United Nations during this session of the General Assembly.

The Republic of Korea also stresses the importance of the partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report. The ASEAN-UNDP partnership aims to narrow the development gap within ASEAN countries and between ASEAN's region and other regions, as well as to integrate ASEAN more broadly into other multilateral organizations such as the World Trade Organization. We support this valuable partnership and expect its continued development.

A related ASEAN initiative that is worthy of note is the ASEAN Regional Forum, an important facilitator of political and security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. We see great potential for closer cooperation between the Forum and United Nations, not least in the fields of preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding. We hope to see the Forum working in partnership with the United Nations to build its capacity for coordinating inter-Asian security matters.

Yet another organization of importance to the Republic of Korea is the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The IPU has been an essential link between the citizens of the world, as represented by their parliamentarians, and the United Nations. Moreover, each national parliament plays a vital role as the primary institution responsible for adapting and translating global norms and agreements into domestic laws. In this regard, my delegation strongly supports increased cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations. Likewise, we reaffirm our support for IPU efforts to provide greater parliamentary contributions to the United Nations.

In closing, my delegation reiterates the importance of interaction and close partnership between the United Nations and regional and other international organizations, with a view to reinforcing each other's capacities and achieving synergistic outcomes.

Mrs. Asif (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation is pleased to participate in the discussion on this very important agenda item. In today's ever-changing world, this agenda item has taken on great importance and remains the focal point of action in many key areas, including peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Indeed, one cannot overstate the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in strengthening peace, security and stability.

Regional and other organizations play a key role in various parts of our world. Recent decades have seen a marked increase in the number of regional organizations, and indeed in the way in which they have grown and transformed over time to take on more responsibilities and greater roles. As the only organization with universal membership, substantial funding, significant capacity and expertise, the United Nations has what is termed in economics a natural monopoly over other organizations.

However, the work of regional, subregional and other organizations cannot be relegated to a secondary or a subsidiary status. These organizations have their own strengths. In fact, every regional and other organization has evolved a niche of its own and offers valuable specialization in many key areas of concern to its member countries. With a focused regional approach, they are likely to come up with important and innovative ideas to find the most appropriate framework for tackling the issues. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations, thus, is imperative. This cooperation should seek to capitalize on the specialization of each organization and, ideally, should be complementary, not competitive.

The Pakistan delegation would like to thank and commend the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/61/256 and Add.1), and for his initiative in promoting such cooperation over the years.

Pakistan is pleased to note the progress achieved during the past year by the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in promoting their shared goals of international peace and security and development. We welcome the effective contacts and consultations that the two organizations have maintained over the past several years.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference, one of the largest intergovernmental organizations, is the collective voice of the Muslim world, spread across three continents. The OIC has been engaged over the years in a constructive and cooperative relationship with the United Nations, reinforcing common efforts in pursuit of peace, development and security. The OIC has endeavoured to promote better understanding and

dialogue between and among different civilizations and cultures. It has taken significant measures in fostering peace, in promoting social and economic development, in combating ethnic or racial intolerance and in seeking an end to the causes of injustice and instability, which are a constant threat to world peace and security.

We would like to take this opportunity to recall the joint statement issued by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, the OIC and the League of Arab States, together with the representatives of Qatar, Spain and Turkey, which appealed for calm after the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed and which also contained a commitment to formulate a joint strategy and agreed measures that would help overcome the crisis, prevent a recurrence and promote tolerance and mutual respect among all religions and communities in Europe and elsewhere. Pakistan firmly believes that there is a lot of work still left to be done in this context and the United Nations and the OIC need to continue to examine ways and means of further expanding and diversifying their cooperation on this issue. Concerted effort and outside-the-box thinking is required to identify new and innovative ways to tackle this issue, which has the potential to cause unnecessary ill will and misunderstanding.

We also welcome the general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the OIC and its specialized institutions in July 2006. However, we would like to encourage the regularization of this trend, with at least one annual general meeting. Both organizations will be able to accrue positive operational benefits from such cooperation and coordination.

We would also like to see the two organizations work more closely in addressing and resolving some of the conflicts in the Muslim world, including the conflicts in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kashmir. More work needs to be done by all concerned to address the root causes of these conflicts and to promote justice and peace.

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is another major regional cooperation organization seeking to promote socio-economic development of its member States on the basis of their common needs. The ECO has played an important role in strengthening and promoting multidimensional regional economic cooperation among its member countries. It has identified four priority areas for intense regional cooperation, namely trade, transport, communications and energy.

The ECO region has a population of nearly 350 million people, immense natural resources and a membership with the political will to tap these resources for the mutual advantage of all. The ECO can serve not only as a vehicle for the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan but also for developing and integrating the economies of the region which have borne the brunt of the conflict in Afghanistan.

The ECO already has in place the blueprints for the region-wide development of transport and communications infrastructure, facilities for trade and investment, banking and insurance, culture and education, and effective use of the region's vast energy resources. We expect the United Nations system and the international community to support the efforts of the ECO and its member States in order to realize these blueprints, not only for the benefit of the region, but also for the greater global community.

Another dynamic regional organization of which Pakistan is a member is the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which represents the seven countries of South Asia — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The organization was launched at the first-ever summit meeting of South Asian heads of State or Government, held in Dhaka in December 1985.

SAARC's objectives are to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life by accelerating economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through mutual cooperation. SAARC also aims at strengthening cooperation with other developing countries and with international and regional organizations with similar aims and objectives. As is the case with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the ECO, United Nations cooperation with SAARC could be mutually beneficial.

To conclude, I would like to express our hope and confidence that the cooperation of the United Nations with both the OIC and the ECO will continue to flourish to the mutual benefit of the three organizations. We also hope that a new chapter will soon begin in the cooperation between the United Nations and SAARC. As an active member of the United Nations, the OIC, the ECO and SAARC,

Pakistan will remain actively involved in the work of all these organizations and pursue policies and strategies that would help enhance coordination and cooperation and, ideally, at the same time, identify and eliminate areas of wasteful overlap.

Mr. Kodera (Japan): Allow me to take this opportunity to comment on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). My delegation would like to commend the President of the organization's forty-fifth session, Ambassador Narinder Singh, and the Government of India for successfully hosting the very fruitful golden jubilee session in New Delhi last April, as well as for taking on the role of Chair of the session.

AALCO is a truly unique regional organization, which promotes international legal cooperation, develops and disseminates expertise in international law by organizing annual meetings, seminars and workshops in international law under consideration in various forums of the United Nations and other bodies, and contributes to the process of codification and development of international law. Japan is confident that the work of codification in particular will be greatly advanced by strengthening the interaction between AALCO and the United Nations.

I would like now to briefly touch upon the state of cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations. We believe that in addressing regional issues, it is essential to ensure that the countries in the region and their regional organizations take ownership of the issues they face. We are happy to note that such ownership has been demonstrated, for example, by the African Union and the African subregional organizations in the course of their efforts to address regional conflicts in recent years.

Japan attaches particularly high value to the role that the African Union has been playing in Darfur, the Sudan. We also commend the efforts made by sub-regional organizations such as the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States in addressing peacekeeping issues. We believe that the assistance of the international community and the United Nations will be more effective if it is provided on the basis of ownership by the region and if it is better coordinated with the organizations from the region concerned.

Japan, for its part, has provided various forms of assistance to promote the capacity-building efforts of the African Union and sub-regional organizations, and will continue to do so. We are convinced that capacity-building by regional organizations will enhance the role those organizations play in the maintenance of international peace and security both in general and within all the regions of the world.

Finally, let me say a few words about the draft resolution contained in document A/61/L.6, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", which was introduced by the representative of Italy at this morning's meeting.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), consisting of parliaments of the majority of Member States, is the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. The IPU, through its wide-ranging activities, has contributed significantly to promoting democracy and enhancing awareness in the general public of the role of the United Nations. As a sponsor of this draft resolution, Japan hopes that the IPU will continue to play the important and unique role it has played until now. Since relations between the United Nations and the IPU are at a critical juncture, my delegation also believes that, as called for in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, Member States should work for

> "strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and national and regional parliaments, in particular through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with a view to furthering all aspects of the Millennium Declaration in all fields of the work of the United Nations and ensuring the effective implementation of United Nations reform". (resolution 60/1, para. 171).

Mr. Kruljevic (Serbia): It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to address two specific questions under this agenda item, namely, the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

The issues that these organizations deal with are closely connected. They include the promotion of stability, the development of democracy and the rule of law, and the advancement and strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The mutual cooperation between these organizations, as well as

their cooperation with the United Nations, is of vital importance in facilitating the resolution of problems in certain regions and in some European States, all the more so since the maintenance of international peace and security requires a multidisciplinary approach and participation and the active contribution of many international institutions.

As a Member State of the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, Serbia supports the cooperation among them. By their commitment to their goals and through their support of political, legal and institutional reforms, the OSCE and the Council of Europe make major contributions to the development of democracy. That is why it is necessary to encourage additional cooperation between these organizations and the United Nations.

The Republic of Serbia, as well as the Western Balkan region as a whole, is still burdened with a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons. In that respect, cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is of particular importance. In Kosovo and Metohija, in particular, human rights and humanitarian issues require adequate cooperation among international organizations.

The activities of the OSCE mission in the Republic of Serbia have been assessed as successful. The mission is a good example of a new model that no longer has the character of a post-conflict or fact-finding effort and is instead committed to strengthening reform processes and democracy in the host countries. The relationship between the OSCE mission in Serbia and the State institutions in the country is based on dialogue and cooperation with full exchange of information. We consider that this method of work should be maintained in order to ensure the success of activities undertaken and the fulfilment of the mission's mandate.

Following the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, the OSCE, together with other international organizations, played an important role in the process of confidence- and institution-building and in democratization by actively supporting the reform process initiated by the Governments of South-Eastern Europe. In addition, the OSCE is at the forefront of regional activities in border management, in line with the Ohrid Conference on Border Security and Management.

We are of the view that the work of OSCE missions in the region aimed at facilitating the return of refugees and expelled persons to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is very important. We believe that further expansion of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE and its offices in the field will contribute to better minority protection, faster return of refugees and displaced persons and resolution of the issue of missing persons.

Within its partnership relationship with the Republic of Serbia, the OSCE has been active in many processes related to the promotion of democracy, rule of law, police reform, protection of human rights and rights of national minorities. The Republic of Serbia has all along emphasized the need for cooperation between the two OSCE missions in the Republic of Serbia, namely, the OSCE Mission in Belgrade and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) in Pristina. The cooperation between these two missions was envisaged in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). In the field, this cooperation is particularly important to resolving the problem of internally displaced and missing persons, the prevention of organized crime, the trade in arms, human beings and narcotic drugs, and international terrorism.

As far as the United Nations and the Council of Europe are concerned, we are convinced that further promotion of their cooperation in its various forms, will contribute, among other things, to reducing duplication of activities and more appropriate use of expert resources. Thus, the two Organizations will be even better able to satisfy the needs of host countries.

Joint United Nations and Council of Europe activities in the field of restoring and protecting the cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija are also of particular importance, especially in view of the establishment of the Independent International Commission for Cultural Heritage in Kosovo, a joint endeavour of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

The third Council of Europe summit in Warsaw in May 2005 emphasized the importance of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals and the present-day challenges such as terrorism and various forms of crime, point to the need

for intensive cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, as well as with other regional organizations. However, it is necessary to clearly define their roles and use each to its best complementary advantage.

The Republic of Serbia will be the chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from May through November 2007. In that period, the Republic of Serbia will seek to encourage even more cooperation between the Council of Europe and other international organizations, and the United Nations, in particular.

In November of this year, the Republic of Serbia will also assume the chairmanship of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC). One of our priorities will be the strengthening of ties between the BSEC and other regional and international organizations and the United Nations specialized agencies. Our specific areas of focus will include the fight against crime, smuggling of human beings, drugs and arms, prevention of illegal migration, cooperation regarding natural and other disasters, environmental protection, education, energy, transport, tourism, the strengthening of cooperation among small- and medium-size enterprises, among others.

Since the activities of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation cover many converging and complementary issues, we are convinced that by strengthening the existing cooperation the organizations could provide additional assistance to my country and to countries of the region of South-Eastern Europe, particularly in the process of their accession to the Euro-Atlantic integration.

Mr. Cheok (Singapore): Since the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, ASEAN has had a fruitful and cooperative relationship with the United Nations, particularly through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). ASEAN nations have worked with the United Nations, both individually and collectively, on many issues, including capacity-building, health, disaster management, security and the Millennium Development Goals. We look forward to deepening this cooperation.

In recent years, both ASEAN and the United Nations have become more aware of the increasing problem of transboundary dangers. These dangers range from the threat of terrorism and nuclear proliferation to large-scale natural disasters, like the 26 December 2004 earthquake and tsunami, as well as possible pandemics such as avian flu. These are threats that individual countries and even regions cannot deal with effectively and comprehensively, and such transboundary dangers require close cooperation at the international level. For this, the United Nations remains the most effective partner.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At present, several ASEAN countries are suffering from "the haze", a severe form of air pollution caused by the illegal clearing of forests and vegetation by burning. Satellite pictures show that most of the hot spots are in parts of Sumatra and Kalimantan in Indonesia. This longstanding problem has escalated in the past decade. It respects no borders and affects several countries in South-East Asia, including Singapore. It has resulted in health problems for the affected populations, as well as adverse economic and social consequences. For example, 10 Indonesian airports have had to close recently because of visibility problems from the haze. Tourism has suffered in the region and day-to-day life for many people has been disrupted.

Over the last 10 years, ASEAN countries have worked together to try to solve this daunting problem. For instance, an ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution was signed in 2002, and almost all ASEAN States have ratified it. Recently, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono pledged that Indonesia would do so. This is a very encouraging move. We applaud Indonesia's commitment.

It is very heartening that Indonesia has acknowledged its responsibility and taken the lead to address this problem. Last week, Indonesia hosted a Sub-Regional Ministerial Meeting on Transboundary Haze Pollution — a very important initiative by President Yudhoyono. The meeting concluded that the haze problem has not been adequately addressed by the region and agreed to seek international expertise to develop a comprehensive plan of action with an effective monitoring and reporting mechanism.

This is in line with Singapore's view that it is critical to take action to prevent future fires. To do this, we should make use of all available resources. ASEAN

will require international assistance, including assistance from the United Nations. In this regard, we welcome Indonesian Environment Minister Rachmat Witoelar's statement following last week's meeting, where he said,

> "We are open to suggestions that will increase our effectiveness in suppressing current and future fires, and we welcome assistance from within and outside the region to overcome this dreadful problem which affects millions of lives".

This is a clarion call to which we hope the international community will respond. The long-standing channels of ASEAN-United Nations cooperation would be an effective and appropriate route to establish and channel assistance. Singapore will also do its part.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): Cooperation with regional organizations in developing and implementing various programmes and projects in almost all spheres of our lives — political, economic, social and cultural — has been a priority for Armenia. We believe that regional organizations create conducive frameworks for the development and advancement of relationships among its members and help to build confidence and trust through their cooperative mechanisms.

In this respect, I would like to touch briefly upon two of the organizations under discussion today: the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Armenia is cooperating with the Council of Europe in political and legal spheres. The year 2005 was a milestone for the fulfilment of our commitments with regard to our membership in that organization. A constitutional referendum on 27 November 2005 finalized the necessary changes in our constitution that would allow existing legislation to be brought into line with our Council of Europe commitments. At the beginning of 2006, the Government of Armenia undertook a two-year process of changing 67 laws, with the assistance of Council of Europe experts. Some of the laws that have already been revised include a law on the constitutional court, which now envisages the right of private citizens to file complaints with the Court, a law on police service, the criminal code and an Ombudsman law.

While complying with the requirements of the Council of Europe, Armenia went beyond the commitments undertaken with respect to its accession to Council of Europe Conventions and signed Protocol No. 13 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which deals with the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances.

To date, Armenia has signed and verified 49 Council of Europe conventions; another 11 are in the pipeline. We consider the improvement of Armenia's legislative framework through the Council of Europe conventions and the monitoring of their implementation to be an important area of cooperation with that organization, and we will strive to expand it.

A week ago, on 12 October, Armenia hosted the twenty-seventh Conference of Council of Europe Ministers of Justice on the role and rights of victims and assistance to them. Ministers from member and observer States, as well as representatives of international organizations, participated in the Conference.

In March 2006, the Council of Europe and the Republic of Armenia Programme of Action was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers; it outlines the priorities of our cooperation with that organization for 2006-2007.

Armenia attaches great importance to its cooperation with another major European organization — namely, the OSCE — in all its dimensions, including the human, political, environmental and economic aspects of security and stability. Currently, there are three large-scale projects under way, thanks to the assistance of the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

In May 2006, the cross-dimensional Mélange rocket fuel disposal project was launched in Armenia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, large stocks of Mélange rocket fuel were left on the territory of the Republic. These stockpiles posed both environmental and security dangers. If a leak were to occur, these highly toxic chemicals could contaminate the environment for decades to come. At the request of the Government of Armenia, the OSCE is helping to convert the rocket fuel into mineral-rich fertilizer, and we are thankful to the Governments of the United States, Germany, Finland and Canada for their financial and expert contributions that made this project possible.

The Police Assistance Programme is part of our cooperation with the OSCE office in Yerevan. It is designed to build trust between the police and society and to contribute to the development of a community-oriented policing model. The Programme supports the strengthening of a Police Training Centre for induction training and the implementation of a modern command and control system.

The opening of an OSCE Programme Implementation Office in the southern part of Armenia is a significant achievement, as it will boost the efforts for socio-economic development of the region. The OSCE Office has established two local public environmental centres there as well. It has also expanded its activities related to human rights protection, freedom of the media, labour migration, trafficking and money-laundering to include areas outside of the capital.

During recent years, both the Council of Europe and the OSCE have been instrumental in establishing democracy and the rule of law in Armenia. However, it is frustrating that the same organizations that are otherwise adamant with regard to human rights issues and open election procedures are astonishingly tolerant when it comes to the increased warmongering and militaristic rhetoric on the part of certain high-level officials in the region and the escalation of an arms race now under way in the conflict-torn region of the South Caucasus.

It is in this respect that Armenia considers the ongoing negotiation process within the OSCE Minsk Group for the resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict to be a vital area of cooperation with the OSCE.

This involves a very competent group of negotiators who are extremely knowledgeable about the nitty-gritty of the conflict and the situation on the ground. The Group represents countries that have political, economic and geopolitical stakes in the region and have a true interest in achieving peace and stability by finding a lasting settlement to the conflict. The Group has contributed tremendously to the virtually uninterrupted dialogue between the parties and to the preservation of relative stability in the region through the monitoring of the ceasefire regime that has effectively been in place for over 12 years without a single peacekeeper on the ground. We are confident that these efforts, if uninterrupted and undiverted, could yield a positive outcome securing a durable and long-lasting solution to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and bringing peace and stability to the region.

It is in the spirit of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE that we believe that, to make the process effective and efficient, any discussion in the United Nations on the Nagorny Karabakh issue should be based on, and reflective of, the processes going on within the Minsk Group. However, during the past two years, under various pretexts, attempts have been made to divert the process of negotiations on Nagorny Karabakh by introducing agenda items, using procedural loopholes at the United Nations and exploiting certain sentiments of Member States. These efforts, which are aimed at creating a seemingly favourable milieu for predetermining the outcome of negotiations, focusing only on one component from the whole negotiation package, will only derail the peace process. Such a piecemeal approach to this conflict will at best postpone a final, lasting solution, but also may make a comprehensive agreement impossible and endanger the fragile relative stability established in the area. Moreover, further attempts in that direction will simply make it imperative to revise the current composition of the parties involved.

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation will focus its statement on only one sub-item of this agenda item, sub-item 108 (k).

Chile is of the view that cooperation between the United Nations system and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is fundamental because it enables us to know the views and concerns of the legislative world with regard to the work of our Organization. This is particularly important with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security; economic and social development; the promotion and defence of human rights, including gender issues; humanitarian assistance; and the promotion of democracy, to mention only the most relevant issues. Multilateralism has a law-making dimension, whose realization often involves the adoption by legislatures of treaties and conventions and authorization to dispatch troops to peace operations; it always involves the budgetary authorization of the contributions that every State makes to the United Nations and other international organizations.

We want parliaments to be aware not only of what we do but also of our motivations and of the sensitive variables that go into multilateral diplomacy. Ongoing systemic contact with parliaments — as represented by their own world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union — will provide us with a two-way street for mutual communication, understanding and support. Furthermore, Chile believes that in areas of such importance as the promotion of democracy, human rights, human security, disarmament and the reform of the United Nations, we have to meet with our lawmakers and move ahead with them for the good of all.

For the important reasons I have mentioned, Chile congratulates the delegation of Italy for having submitted draft resolution A/61/L.6 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We have the honour of sponsoring that text, as orally revised by the representative of Italy. We are convinced that the draft resolution, which is perfectly in line with what is contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1), will be the right tool to strengthen the links and cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It is in this spirit that the delegation of Chile urges the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution before us by consensus.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/2 of 13 October 1980, I now call on the observer for the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.

Mr. Kamil (Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization): Allow me at the outset, being from the Arab Republic of Egypt, to say a few words in Arabic in honour of our sister, the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. Then, I shall proceed in English, the official language of the organization that I lead, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO).

(*spoke in Arabic*)

I am very pleased to address this unique Assembly, which is made up of delegations from the four corners of the Earth, forming an elite of ministers, ambassadors, diplomats, statesmen and politicians who have come with serious-mindedness to deal with the gamut of problems facing the international community and who spare no effort to find solutions to those problems. We take great pride in seeing Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa presiding over the sixty-first session of the General Assembly as the first Arab woman and the third woman in the history of the Organization to have been elected to the post of President. We extend to her our sincere congratulations on having earned the full confidence and trust that was placed in you. May her efforts be crowned with success, especially at this decisive, dangerous and sensitive turning point of history.

There are many vital substantive issues, some of which pose a threat to us as individuals and groups and to international peace and security; some of these have a direct impact on innocent civilians in various regions of the world. Those threats include terrorism in all its horrific forms, unprecedented violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and disregard and lack of respect for international law, international instruments and international humanitarian law. Nor must we ignore the perils that threaten groups and individuals in all regions because of the disgraceful widening gap in standards of social justice and between abject poverty and excessive wealth. Nor should we forget environmental disasters and their startling effects on the Earth's climate and agriculture, fostering desertification and floods, or their implications for development, the rights of peoples to control their own resources, the evil of corruption and other problems.

In spite of all of those problems, Madam President, we are certain that this international forum will, under your guidance, and thanks to your considerable experience, find solutions that will meet the expectations of all parties. We express once again our hope for the success of our work.

I will continue my statement in English, which is the official language of our organization.

(*spoke in English*)

The item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization is included in the General Assembly's agenda on a biennial basis, and although we participated as an observer at the sixtieth session, we were not accorded the opportunity to take the floor. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to convey our cordial greetings to the United Nations in connection with its sixtieth anniversary.

The wide-ranging reform measures set in motion by global political leaders at the 2005 Summit in the areas of development, peace, collective security, human rights, the rule of law and the strengthening of the United Nations were groundbreaking. An equally important achievement of the sixtieth session, which we welcome, was the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council.

On behalf of AALCO and on my own account, I express appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan and his staff for their continuous hard work and commitment. This being the last year of his second term in office, I would like, on behalf of AALCO and on my own account, to express to Mr. Kofi Annan our best wishes for all his future endeavours.

We also express our heartiest congratulations to the Secretary-General-designate, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea. We assure him that we will extend our full cooperation and support to him in the discharge of his mandate.

As I said at the beginning of my statement, the peoples of the United Nations are increasingly confronted with challenges that threaten global security and require collective efforts if we are to confront and resolve them. Multilateralism is the only way to effectively tackle such global challenges. I wish every success to the General Assembly at its current session as we seek to effectively attain significant advancement on issues of particular concern to developing countries, such as the follow-up to the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals, the prevention of armed conflict, agreement on an international convention against terrorism, the protection of the environment, the revitalization of the General Assembly, and the reform of the Security Council. We are confident that the present session will also provide an opportunity for us to assess the real impact made by the newly established Peacebuilding Commission and Human Rights Council. We hope that the United Nations will continue to remain a beacon of hope, peace and prosperity for the peoples of the world.

I draw the attention of the Assembly to the report of the Secretary-General on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations" (A/61/256 and Add.1). That excellent report clearly demonstrates that the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations is of particular importance with a view to achieving the common goals of peace, security, stability and development, advancing the rule of law and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

The complexity of global problems has turned the United Nations into a special setting for developing fruitful cooperative relationships with regional organizations. The United Nations is benefiting, and could benefit more, from the experience and capacity of regional organizations on issues of common interest. Such organizations could also contribute to managing issues at the regional and national levels. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations therefore needs to be enhanced, promoted and supported by States.

AALCO is a common platform and a forum for bringing together the Asian and African States with a view to strengthening their participation in the process of the development of international law and to enabling them to effectively realize their goals and aspirations. With a sense of pride and deep satisfaction, I am honoured to inform this body that AALCO is celebrating its golden jubilee this year. The organization, considered to be a tangible outcome of the historic 1955 Bandung Summit of Asian and African leaders, has promoted Afro-Asian solidarity, particularly on international law matters.

AALCO remains a unique body in terms of developing Asian-African perspectives on international law, but it also acts as a bridge between the world's two most populous continents. Our annual sessions, which are recognized and respected in international law circles, play an important role in facilitating the interaction of people, including eminent jurists, from the two continents, who deliberate on important issues of international law with the aim of reaching a common position on all of them.

The establishment of an equitable and just world order that serves the interests of the peoples of the world without discrimination, on the basis of sovereign equality among all States and respect for their independence and territorial integrity, is the raison d'être of international law. Issues concerning peace and security, human rights, international humanitarian law, accountability for international crimes, environmental

issues, equitable trading regimes, among others, are addressed by the international community through the progressive development and codification of international law.

In the 50 years of its existence, AALCO has taken part, directly or indirectly, in every major development in the field of international law, keeping in mind the specific interests of the developing countries; the membership of AALCO is testimony to that.

Our modest membership of seven in 1956 has grown in strength to 48 today, and we represent two thirds of the world's population. We are confident that the number of member States will continue to grow. With the full support and cooperation of its member States, the organization follows a dynamic work programme that has always been kept in tune with the needs of the time and is suitably oriented to meet the challenges posed in contemporary international society in general and the needs of an expanding membership, encompassing the two continents of Asia and Africa.

In this, the organization's golden jubilee year, a new era in its history has begun. The new building of the permanent headquarters of AALCO was inaugurated, in conjunction with our forty-fifth golden jubilee session, in New Delhi on 6 April 2006. Because of the magnanimity of our generous host — the Government of India — AALCO now, in its fiftieth year, has a permanent abode. The organization will very soon start functioning from its new premises, thus implementing a new series of activities with much broader scope.

AALCO's two most recent annual sessions, held, respectively, in Nairobi in 2005 and at our headquarters in New Delhi in 2006, were occasions for us to consider our agenda items in depth. They include the work of the International Law Commission; the Law of the Sea; international terrorism; establishing cooperation against trafficking in women and children; the International Criminal Court; human rights in Islam; the deportation of Palestinians and other Israeli practices, among them the massive immigration and settlement of Jews in all of the occupied territories in violation of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949; and, finally, expressions of folklore and its international protection. That listing is indicative of the wide range of topics in international law that AALCO considers, while preserving its ability to reorient its agenda to accord with the changing times.

A unique feature of our sessions is the special meetings organized by AALCO in collaboration with friendly international organizations on topics of contemporary relevance in international law. At Nairobi, the Kenyan Government, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and AALCO joined hands to organize a special meeting on environmental law and sustainable development, which addressed issues pertaining to the Asian-African perspective on international environmental law, compliance with and enforcement of environmental law and problems and prospects related to the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

At AALCO's Golden Jubilee meetings in New Delhi — a momentous occasion for our organization — we organized three such special meetings, one on legal identity and statelessness, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); a second on universal jurisdiction and its role in the enforcement of international humanitarian law, organized jointly with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and a third on international migration law, in association with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Those meetings were highly successful and featured extensive exchanges of ideas between the subject experts and delegates. I take this opportunity to thank our partners in those endeavours — UNEP, UNHCR, ICRC and IOM — for their valuable help and cooperation in making the meetings a success.

Intersessional activities also continue to represent an important part of the AALCO work programme. One such event was the May 2006 Kuala Lumpur Meeting of International Experts on Human Rights in Islam, organized by the Governments of Malaysia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the AALCO secretariat. The main theme of the Meeting was understanding human rights as enshrined in Islam. The Meeting highlighted, among other things, the fundamental principles of human rights as set out in Islam in order to examine how the concept of human rights has been adopted and integrated into national laws and practices. A galaxy of experts from around the world attended and presented their views during the Conference.

AALCO has consistently sought to develop a synergy with the United Nations, given the two organizations' common objectives, complementary mandates and respective comparative advantages. It has been supportive of the United Nations, and its work has been aimed at rendering assistance to AALCO member Governments in their consideration of the agenda items before the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. The preparation of extensive studies to assist AALCO member Governments' participation in international legal conferences convoked under the auspices of the United Nations, and on selected items on the agenda of the General Assembly, is part and parcel of the regular activities of the AALCO secretariat.

AALCO makes an important contribution towards bringing together the countries of Asia and Africa, with a view to effectively coordinating the position of developing countries in codification conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations. It especially contributed during the negotiations leading to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and in the establishment of the International Criminal Court — all of which have been well recognized and appreciated.

In acknowledgement of its role, the conferral of permanent observer status to AALCO by the United Nations General Assembly was a turning point in the history of the organization. The inclusion of certain items and topics under consideration by the United Nations in the work programme of AALCO reflects its contribution to the fulfilment of the purposes and the principles of the United Nations.

AALCO and the International Law Commission (ILC) share a mutually supportive relationship. The follow-up of the work of the ILC is our statutory obligation and hence is regularly supported by in-depth secretariat studies on the item. Substantive deliberations on the topic also take place at our annual sessions. The ILC Chairman or his representative addresses our annual sessions and explains the progress of work achieved in the Commission. Subsequently, I will present before the Commission the crux of the statements made by AALCO member States at the AALCO annual session.

The relationship between our two organizations has been further strengthened by the convening of joint AALCO-ILC meetings in conjunction with the meetings of AALCO legal advisers, which take place each year on the sidelines of the annual General Assembly sessions.

It has been my constant endeavour to strengthen the relationship between AALCO and other intergovernmental organizations. Our organization has concluded formal agreements with a number of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Maritime Organization, IOM, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, UNHCR, UNEP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

We value our relationship with the United Nations family of organizations and shall continue to strive to fortify that cooperation towards the strengthening of the international legal order. In that context, it is worth mentioning that AALCO has initiated dialogue with several specialized agencies to conduct training programmes and workshops in several areas of international law. Successful attainment of this objective would help in building the capacity of international law, particularly with regard to Asian and African States.

The scourge of international terrorism continues to plague us. It is a stark reality of our times that no part of the world is immune from the horrendous acts of terror perpetrated on innocent civilians by terrorists. That horrible crime affects the world's peace and prosperity and hampers the development process. Addressing the phenomenon of terrorism is a complex and challenging task. Terrorist activities by any individuals, groups, non-State entities or States must be checked by all possible means. In that regard, we welcome the recent adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288) by the General Assembly. Although the Strategy is an important step ahead, we look forward to working diligently with our member States in order to encourage further momentum on the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism that is being discussed by United Nations Member States, which, when adopted, will reflect the views of the entire international community.

Before concluding, allow me to thank all delegations that spoke today about AALCO and its activities and in support of the cooperation between the United Nations and AALCO. I would mention in particular the host of AALCO — the Republic of India — and China, Japan and Egypt.

As the head of an international legal body, I would like to conclude by stressing in particular the importance of the full respect for and enhancement and implementation of the rule of law in all areas, in order to keep our international community within the boundaries of a civilized world where only justice, equality and one standard criterion prevail. Only then can we expect a significant reduction in the many evils around us.

The Acting President: Before I call on the next speaker, I would plead with speakers to be economical with time, because we have a number of draft resolutions to go through this evening.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/6 of 17 October 1989, I now call on the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Mr. Davis (Council of Europe): The previous speaker, on behalf of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, told us that he was speaking for 48 Member States. As Secretary General of the Council of Europe, I can only speak for 46 Member States, but they do represent almost the whole of Europe. And on their behalf, as many previous speakers have done, I want to begin by paying tribute to the outgoing Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who, for the past 10 years, has spared no effort in grappling with the most intractable problems facing our planet.

At the Council of Europe, we look forward to working with his successor, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the agenda of our future cooperation is to be spelled out in a draft resolution to be submitted to this General Assembly.

The Council of Europe will continue to contribute to the global effort in protecting human rights; campaigning against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance; protecting persons belonging to minorities; preventing torture and inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment; fighting against trafficking in human beings; combating violence against women; and protecting the rights of the child.

For the Council of Europe, all those issues are priorities, but the challenge which tops the list is the fight against terrorism. In that area, cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations already exists, but I believe that it should be reinforced.

Let us be clear. At the Council of Europe, we despise terrorists because they are criminals and because they try to destroy everything we stand for and everything we believe in. The Council of Europe is best known for its work on the protection of human rights — and with reason. Our campaigns, our standard-setting activities, our monitoring mechanisms based on independent expertise and peer pressure, and especially the European Convention on Human Rights, which is enforced through the European Court of Human Rights, mean that our organization is the reference point when it comes to the protection of human rights in Europe.

But the Council of Europe is not only about human rights. When it comes to the fight against terrorism, the Council of Europe has adopted conventions allowing our member States to improve their cooperation and diminish the capacity of terrorists to enlist new recruits and to strike whenever and wherever they choose.

Those new treaties establish as criminal offences several acts which may lead to acts of terrorism, such as incitement, recruitment and training. They also reinforce cooperation in the prevention of terrorism by modifying existing arrangements for extradition and mutual assistance. Our activities to strengthen cooperation in law enforcement and to help the victims of terrorism are not in contradiction with our insistence on respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In Europe, we reject the false choice between freedom and security. That is not some idealistic delusion, but the result of a long and tragic experience with terrorism on European soil. The so-called troubles in Northern Ireland — to give only one example — lasted for a quarter of a century, during which more than 3,500 people were killed. Germany had Baader Meinhof, Italy had the Red Brigades, Spain has had Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, and both the Russian Federation and Turkey continue to be targets for terrorists.

We have learned our lessons the hard way, and we use that experience in responding to the threat from Al-Qaida. Experience tells us that giving up on human rights and justice is not only wrong, but also dangerous.

The President of the United States of America recently said that the fight against terrorism is the defining ideological conflict of the twenty-first century. But an ideological conflict cannot be won by force alone. If we want to defeat terrorists, we must remain faithful to our ideas and values. People around the world must know that we are right and that terrorists are wrong — that we are just and that they are criminals.

We cannot win an ideological conflict with secret prisons, or with people being kept in a legal limbo and deprived of safeguards which are the foundation of our systems of justice and of our democracies. Those methods are not only morally wrong; they are dangerous because they are exactly what terrorists want. They want us to give up the most fundamental, defining features of our freedom. They want to level the field between good and evil. They want to set a wrong against a wrong.

We cannot let that happen, we must not let that happen and we will not let it happen. In Europe, we are not only resolved to fight terrorists; we are determined to defeat them. And have no doubt — we will.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/5 of 8 October 1999, I now call on the Secretary General of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

Mr. Chrysanthopoulos (Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization): Since this is the first time that I have taken the floor, allow me at the outset to congratulate Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa upon her election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

The foundations of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) were laid down in 1992 as a political initiative for economic cooperation in the wake of tremendous changes that had taken place in the world. Upon the ratification of its charter on 1 May 1999, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization was born with a legal identity on the international scene.

It was a period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the founding fathers of BSEC wanted to create an organization that could promote peace and stability in the Black Sea region through prosperity. And that actually happened. The organization was able to effectively promote peace and stability in the area through closer cooperation among its member States. In the margins of ministerial meetings, ministers of countries not maintaining diplomatic relations among themselves could meet and discuss the bilateral problems that separated them. The essence is that peace and stability have been maintained in the region for the past 14 years and BSEC has played an important role towards that end.

In those 14 years, BSEC has become a forum for discussion and cooperation in areas ranging from energy to transport, trade and economic development, the environment, tourism, agriculture, combating organized crime, terrorism, small and medium-sized enterprises, emergency relief, and the elimination of the consequences of natural and human-made disasters. Recently we added culture as an additional area of our cooperation. Furthermore, BSEC has built a permanent and extensive institutional framework of cooperation that covers all levels of governance. On the intergovernmental level, the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs is the highest decision-making organ. At the parliamentary level is the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly, or PABSEC. In the financial sector there is BSTDB, the trade and development bank of BSEC, and the BSEC Business Council. Finally, we have the International Centre for Black Sea Studies, which is BSEC's think tank.

BSEC has also elaborated binding agreements and common action plans on key issues of regional cooperation. Examples include the Agreement on Combating Organized Crime and its protocols, and the Agreements on Cooperation in Emergency Situations, both signed in 1998. The establishment of the Project Development Fund in October 2002 was another important development. Its purpose is to facilitate the elaboration and promotion of projects with high regional cooperation and development impact in the BSEC region at the early stages of their conception. Contributions from outside donors are welcome, provided that their sources are transparent and the conditions attached to them are consistent with the principles and objectives of the BSEC organization.

BSEC has at last reached the point where it is in the process of starting the implementation of regional projects of great importance for the Black Sea region. The Ministers of Transport of BSEC, at their historic meeting in Sochi last month, agreed to go ahead with the construction of a ring highway around the Black Sea. It is a major 7,000-kilometre project called the Road of the Argonauts, which will change the life of the people of the BSEC countries by bringing further economic development to the region through facilitating the overland transport of goods within BSEC and from Europe to Asia and vice versa, and tourism. The second project agreed in Sochi was the Motorways of the Sea of the BSEC region. It will make the Black Sea smaller by creating the necessary infrastructure for better connecting the Black Sea ports and the Black Sea with the Mediterranean and Caspian Seas.

Another area of our attention concerns the relations between BSEC and the European Union. With the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union next year, the latter will have at last reached the Black Sea. Consequently, there is a need to enhance relations between BSEC and the European Union and to develop an enhanced framework of cooperation with Brussels. The issue was discussed on 14 September at the meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of the European Union, and we remain confident that we will soon have concrete results.

In June next year, BSEC will be celebrating its fifteenth anniversary, and Turkey, which will be chairing the organization at that time, will host a summit that will endorse serious and significant documents concerning reform aspects of BSEC. We are confident that after that summit, BSEC will emerge stronger, more efficient and project oriented.

At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 54/5 of 8 October 1999, granted observer status to the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, a landmark development that enabled BSEC to take its place in the family of international organizations. Assembly resolution 55/211 of 20 December 2000 opened up new avenues for BSEC to develop cooperation or working relationships with other organizations within the United Nations system and beyond. BSEC has signed cooperation agreements with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. BSEC has also developed cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the World Bank. We have also begun to cooperate closely with the United Nations Development Programme, with which we are working on a common project concerning cross-border cooperation within the Black Sea region.

Allow me to go back to BSEC-ECE cooperation and underline that cooperation in the transport field has increased through application of ECE experience in facilitating international transport processes to the BSEC region. We are in contact with the ECE to receive its expertise on the construction of the Black Sea ring highway decided at Sochi.

At this point I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his factual report on the status of cooperative relationship between BSEC and various United Nations organizations during the 2005-2006 period. We appreciate his recommendation that the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system should continue to hold consultations with BSEC and formulate and implement joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest.

We followed with great interest the Security Council debate on 20 September on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and other intergovernmental bodies in maintaining peace and security (see S/PV.5529). We also read with great interest the text of the presidential statement issued on this matter (S/PRST/2006/39). As a regional economic organization, BSEC is not directly involved in peacekeeping and conflict prevention. However, it renders its contribution to peace and security through economic cooperation and by means of implementing the so-called soft security measures. And within that framework, we are willing to cooperate closely with the United Nations Secretary-General and with other competent United Nations bodies.

Before concluding, I wish to pay tribute to the Russian Federation, the current Chairman-in-Office of BSEC, for introducing the draft resolution that is now before the General Assembly. I wish also to thank the other sponsors. I appeal to the members of this Assembly to adopt the text by consensus. The draft resolution will give a new impetus to BSEC's

cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the pursuit of the objectives and principles enshrined in the Charter, as well as those of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. BSEC will continue to play its role with determination in efforts to strengthen multilateral cooperation to meet the global challenges of this millennium.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V) of 1 November 1950, I now call on the observer for the League of Arab States.

Mr. Mahmassani (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me begin by congratulating the President of the Assembly on her election to preside over the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I take this opportunity to express our congratulations to the President of the sixtieth session on his wise and skilful conduct of that session. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report submitted to the Assembly at this session on the close and multidisciplinary cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League in confronting the challenges and dangers that bedevil international peace and security.

The League of Arab States and its specialized agencies wish to continue and intensify cooperation with the United Nations in all fields, as emphasized by the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/256). During the 2004-2006 period, cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations covered all areas, including participation in the sixth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional and intergovernmental organizations, held in New York in July 2005. A standing committee, based on a proposal by the Secretary-General of the Arab League, was created. In addition, the United Nations and the Arab League co-chaired the sectoral meeting on the implementation and financing of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development, held in Cairo in November 2005.

The Arab League and the United Nations also co-chaired the ninth meeting on cooperation between the secretariats of the two organizations, held in Vienna in April 2006, at which time the participants assessed the cooperative activities that had taken place since the eighth meeting. They decided to consider the organization in 2007 of several training sessions in connection with election monitoring, conflict prevention and resolution, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants and the establishment of a regional database in the Arab States on small arms and light weapons.

Participants also considered the organization of a joint meeting of relevant United Nations agencies and bodies to help the League of Arab States establish an early-warning system in the context of the Security Council and the Arab League's concept of peace, so that they could benefit from United Nations experience in preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution and discuss ways and means to allow the League of Arab States to draw on the technical expertise of the United Nations in building an Arab peace infrastructure in the context of cooperation with the Security Council.

The participants at the ninth meeting also stressed the need to build a culture of dialogue among civilizations and strengthen relations between them in order to bring different civilizations together and to preserve and safeguard the values of human dignity and peaceful coexistence. With regard to the importance of ensuring respect for religious belief and religious sites, the meeting paid special attention to the joint communiqué issued in Doha by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Qatar and of Turkey.

In November 2005, a preparatory meeting took place in Cairo with the participation of the United Nations and the Arab League on Iraqi national reconciliation, as well as participation in supervising the 2006 presidential elections in the Comoros. The Arab League and the United Nations also witnessed the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Movement. The League and the United Nations are also cooperating in helping the people of Somalia to achieve comprehensive national reconciliation. We are cooperating with the United Nations Development Programme on the partnership designed to develop animal resources in Somalia.

The World Health Organization is also involved in Somalia in the area of health, and the Arab League has been cooperating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in formulating the Arab Charter on Human Rights. It has also set up workshops, in cooperation with the United

Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and has signed a memorandum of understanding with other organizations for an exchange of assistance at the national and regional levels regarding the role and participation of women in development. The League of Arab States and ESCWA will continue to follow up on the recommendations and initiatives that resulted from the Arab International Forum on Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the context of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

The efforts made by the Arab League to enhance full cooperation with the United Nations in all spheres demonstrate that the League wants to work together with the United Nations to ensure the implementation of all the resolutions adopted by this Organization, whether they relate to disarmament, counter-terrorism or the peaceful settlement of disputes.

One of the main priorities of the Arab League is the quest for a just and lasting resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with international law, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as the enhancing of cooperation between the two organizations, which can help us to confront international threats and challenges and to establish international peace and security. This would include freeing the Middle East from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with international law. This desire for cooperation with the United Nations is rooted in the Arab character, which believes in tolerance and peaceful coexistence with others through a dialogue among civilizations.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Anders Johnson.

Mr. Johnson (Inter-Parliamentary Union): The Assembly has before it the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (A/61/256, part three). I think that members will agree that the report attests to a dynamic and substantive partnership between the two organizations. These developments would not have been possible without the vision of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. We congratulate him for his remarkable achievements here at the United Nations.

Last year, leaders of parliaments from all over the world met here at United Nations Headquarters to declare their support for a strong and effective United Nations. They pledged to assist in implementing decisions taken at the United Nations by ratifying international instruments, translating those commitments into national legislation, approving the budgets and exercising oversight of the executive. They also stated their wish to make the United Nations accountable to the people it serves throughout the world.

The terms of the Declaration of the World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments are echoed in the World Summit Outcome, which calls for strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and national and regional parliaments, in particular through the IPU, with a view to furthering all aspects of the Millennium Declaration and promoting United Nations reform. These points are taken up in the Secretary-General's report, and the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU echoes some of the key suggestions made in that report.

The Secretary-General welcomes the annual parliamentary hearing held at the United Nations and other specialized parliamentary meetings at major United Nations conferences, and calls for such joint United Nations-IPU events to be developed further. In fact, we are doing that already. At the 2006 parliamentary hearing that we will be holding here in a few weeks time, we will look at conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and the parliamentarians will examine the Secretary-General's major report on the subject.

Over the past year, the IPU has held a series of specialized parliamentary meetings at the United Nations designed to raise awareness among lawmakers and encourage a more coherent parliamentary contribution to some major global problems. The meetings have focused on innovative forms of financing for development, women's participation in politics, national strategies to combat HIV/AIDS and governance in the least developed countries.

We have begun consultations with the Office of the President of the General Assembly, various United Nations departments and representatives of the United

Nations membership in order to pinpoint areas for future parliamentary action. I should add that we believe that a more coherent system of consultation between the United Nations and the IPU needs to be developed.

The Secretary-General concurs with that view. In his report, he invites the two organizations to consider a permanent mechanism for consultation and coordination. He goes on to suggest that ways could be explored to involve the IPU more systematically in system-wide strategies for consideration by the United Nations system and the Chief Executives Board.

The IPU is anxious to give practical shape to these recommendations. During the recent discussion here on the revitalization of the General Assembly, the IPU proposed to put the annual parliamentary hearing on the agenda of the General Assembly itself. The hearing could thus serve as a political sounding board for the General Assembly on some of the larger issues on its own agenda. At the same time, it would expose members of parliament to the work of the General Assembly and enlist their support in implementing Assembly decisions.

A few weeks ago, the IPU addressed the United Nations High-Level Committee on Programmes on the question of stronger cooperation between the United Nations system and national parliaments. I draw the attention of members to the concept note prepared by the IPU for that meeting.

We are ready to find ways to ensure parliamentary support for some of the major cross-cutting issues, such as health, employment, environmental protection, migration, violence against children, the rights of persons with disabilities and gender mainstreaming.

At the operational level, the IPU has scaled up its work in a number of areas: providing specialized knowledge on parliaments and their mandate, structure and working methods; setting standards and developing best practices for parliamentary democracy and free and fair elections; providing technical support to parliaments, including through a global centre for information and communication technology in parliament, recently launched with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs; promoting dialogue and reconciliation on the basis of the unique track record of the IPU in facilitating political dialogue between adversaries through parliamentary diplomacy; offering support to parliaments in the areas of human rights and respect for international human rights instruments; and promoting gender equality and partnership between men and women in politics.

As the IPU develops such programmes it also seeks to strengthen its cooperation with the new United Nations bodies. The IPU has developed a close working relationship with the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), and earlier this week the two organizations signed a cooperation agreement. Two projects submitted by the IPU — one concerning work by national parliaments in Africa in enforcing international human rights conventions, and the other in support of women's political participation in Burundi — have been approved for UNDEF funding and will be entering the implementation phase in the coming weeks.

The IPU is also working with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Last week, we participated in the Peacebuilding Commission session on Burundi, in which the IPU put forward a series of proposals for action in the field of good governance.

Last but not least, the IPU is looking forward to developing a close working relationship with the new Human Rights Council. This will build on our past work with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which has included the publication of a series of guides for parliamentarians on international human rights standards and the convening of round tables and seminars for parliamentarians on prominent human rights issues. A handbook dedicated to the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is currently in the making.

We have before us a unique opportunity to forge a truly strategic partnership between the United Nations and the IPU in pursuit of world peace, security, development and democratic progress. The IPU is ready to take on this challenge, and we know that in order to succeed we will need the committed assistance of all members.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Mission of Italy for having introduced draft resolution A/61/L.6, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as well as the many countries that are sponsoring the draft resolution. On behalf of

the IPU, I urge all members to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now call on the observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Wahab (Organization of the Islamic Conference): The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for the report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations, as contained in document A/61/256 and Add.1.

As the second-largest intergovernmental organization, after the United Nations, the OIC represents 57 member States. It is a diverse group of nations in all respects — economically, politically and culturally. The significant demographic strength and resource potential of OIC member States has led to a pronounced new orientation at the OIC, as reflected in the 10-year programme of action adopted at the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Summit in December last year. The 10-year programme of action assesses the most prominent challenges facing the Muslim world today and outlines pragmatic and objective strategies to address them effectively. It responds to the need to cooperate decisively and to take the necessary initiatives to face the grave political, socio-economic, cultural and scientific challenges of the Muslim world and to effectively deal with their implications for its unity, peace, security and development.

In that regard, the OIC is devising programmes to increase its capacity in diverse areas such as peacebuilding, the promotion of human rights, good governance, accountability and transparency. Poverty alleviation and the socio-economic development of the least developed countries, especially in Africa, as well as the education and scientific and technological development of the member States, also remain high-priority areas for the OIC.

As reflected in the draft resolution, which has been circulated to all Member States and to which the Chairman of the OIC group referred this morning, the Secretary-General of the OIC has taken a broader and more active role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding, and has been involved in peace efforts in various parts of the world, particularly those involving the States members of the OIC.

The OIC, however, is not trying to address all of these challenges alone; it has willing partners, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies, civil society and other regional organizations.

We are happy to note that cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations is increasing, while direct contacts occur frequently between the two secretaries-general on matters of mutual interest. The desire of both organizations is to continue to cooperate closely in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and scientific fields to find solutions to global problems.

On behalf of the OIC and its specialized institutions, I would like to reassure the General Assembly that the OIC remains dedicated to the joint tasks that our two organizations are pursuing.

One important area of collaboration between our two bodies is taking place in the area of humanitarian work. Immediately after the tsunami disaster and the devastating earthquakes in Asia, the OIC contributed significantly to the work of relief efforts in the region. The OIC has worked closely with other intergovernmental organizations to help to end famine in Somalia and Niger. It collaborated with UNICEF to organize the first ministerial-level conference on the rights of the child, which was held in Morocco in November 2005. Next month, the OIC is convening the first-ever conference on the role of women in development, to which all relevant agencies of the United Nations system have been invited; we hope that they will be able to participate.

In July this year, the OIC signed a memorandum of understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that focuses on cooperation in the areas of information-sharing; building regional, subregional and national capacities for the adoption of policies and guidelines on human rights; and encouraging the ratification of human rights treaties.

I would like to conclude my statement by expressing the hope and expectation that cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC will be swiftly enhanced in all areas of common concern, values and ideals. While we can leave it to history to pronounce its judgement on the outcome of our joint

efforts, the challenges of our time place heavy burdens and common responsibilities on the shoulders of both organizations. In assuming those responsibilities, the OIC looks forward to closer cooperation and further strengthened interaction with all agencies of the United Nations system.

Mr. Onischenko (Ukraine): The delegation of the Ukraine would like to make a statement as the Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

The past few weeks have been marked by unprecedented challenges to global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament efforts, as well as to international peace and security. The announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of a nuclear test conducted on 9 October drew a universal outcry and prompted international bodies and world leaders to express their strongest protest.

The unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1718 (2006) sent a resolute message to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and reconfirmed the determination of the international community to halt the process of the increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That development also represented a tough challenge for the CTBTO Preparatory Commission as an accredited international body in the field and for its monitoring and verification machinery. Ukraine is proud of the fact that the Commission and the Provisional Technical Secretariat were the first among international bodies to take prompt action in response to the announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I wish to recall in that connection that on 6 and 9 October both the Chairperson of the Preparatory Commission and the Executive Secretary issued statements containing strong messages to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concerning its actions. Let me reiterate the calls in those statements for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not to engage in any nuclear testing and to exercise every restraint in the future, in order to avoid steps that would have major international repercussions, as well as the call on all States for maximum restraint and for continuing a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions.

At the subsequent open-ended meeting of the Bureau of the Preparatory Commission, which was convened on 9 October, just a few hours after the announcement, delegations expressed profound concern with regard to the course of action taken by Pyongyang.

Later, at a special meeting of the Commission on 13 October, delegations expressed appreciation for the quality of the information issued by the Provisional Technical Secretariat following the explosion, as well as for its rapid dissemination, and commended it for the technical organizational success that enabled it to quickly make reliable data concerning the event available to the State signatories and to the international community. We also wish to join other States in praising the efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat and offer our full appreciation and support to the Executive Secretary, Tibor Tóth, and welcome his report to the Assembly today.

Recent events have directed the renewed and increased attention of the world community to the role of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) — a role that is difficult to overestimate with regard to the issue of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation. This issue remains one of the most important challenges facing humankind today.

My country has also made a crucial contribution towards achieving the goal of the CTBT. It has been more than a decade since Ukraine renounced its nuclear arsenal — the third largest nuclear arsenal at the time. Also, we were among the very first nations to sign and ratify the CTBT and to implement fully our obligations and commitments under the global non-proliferation regime.

Ukraine also feels a special responsibility in that respect. In its capacity as the coordinator of the efforts of the Eastern European States to foster the ratification of the CTBT, my country has steadfastly supported the efforts by its partners and the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO to promote the Treaty. In that regard, we welcome the recent ratification of the Treaty by new States parties and call upon other States to follow suit.

Ukraine also applauds the steps taken to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially the recent progress to establish such a zone in Central Asia. We recognize the efforts to promote and create such a zone in the Middle East and are in favour of achieving a verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

By chairing the Preparatory Commission this year, Ukraine continues to work on an enhanced verification system, which remains at the core of the CTBT. Ukraine is encouraged by the efforts of the CTBTO to establish the Treaty's verification machinery. Substantial progress has been made in building up the system during the past year.

In addition to its primary goals, the CTBT verification system can bring other civilian benefits, in particular through the establishment of a tsunami warning system. That achievement, along with the scientific and civilian gains resulting from the operations of the CTBT, helps to convince those States that continue to hesitate to join the Treaty. In that respect, my delegation appreciates the outreach activities of the Executive Secretary and encourages the Provisional Technical Secretariat to continue its relevant efforts. Ukraine, as the Chair of the Preparatory Commission, will shortly introduce a draft resolution on that agenda sub-item.

My delegation is confident that the operational and effective monitoring and verification system will provide a credible way to ensure Treaty compliance. We are committed to making a strong contribution towards that objective, including through hosting of an international monitoring system station in Ukraine.

Just one month ago, Ukraine joined the ministerial statement that was adopted at the meeting held in New York on 20 September, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature. We wish to reaffirm here our adherence to the commitments contained in that document.

My country, whose role in nuclear disarmament can serve as an example, remains among the strongest and most consistent supporters of the standard international instrument in the field. Ukraine reaffirms its determination to further contribute to the efforts to achieve the goals stipulated by the Treaty.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. Before we proceed further, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding to consider draft resolutions A/61/L.6, as orally revised, and A/61/L.7, at the present meeting.

In this connection, since the two draft resolutions were only circulated earlier today, it will be necessary to waive the relevant provisions of rule 78 of the rules of procedure. The relevant provision of rule 78 reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting".

Unless I hear any objections, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with the proposal to waive that provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/61/L.4, A/61/L.5, A/61/L.6, as orally revised, and A/61/L.7.

Draft resolution A/61/L.4 is entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Corporation Organizations". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/61/L.4: Austria, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.4?

Draft resolution A/61/L.4 was adopted (resolution 61/4).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/61/L.5 is entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/61/L.5: the Central African Republic, Madagascar, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.5?

Draft resolution A/61/L.5 was adopted (resolution 61/5).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/61/L.6, as orally revised, is entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/61/L.6: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia,

Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Georgia, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Namibia, Nauru, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Yemen and Zambia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.6, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/61/L.6, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 61/6).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/61/L.7 is entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/61/L.7: Austria, Burkina Faso, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Mauritius, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Thailand, Togo and Ukraine.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.7?

Draft resolution A/61/L.7 was adopted (resolution 61/7).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (b), (d), (j) and (k) of agenda item 108?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 108.

Before adjourning the meeting, I wish to inform members that draft resolutions under other sub-items of agenda item 108 will be submitted at a later date.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.